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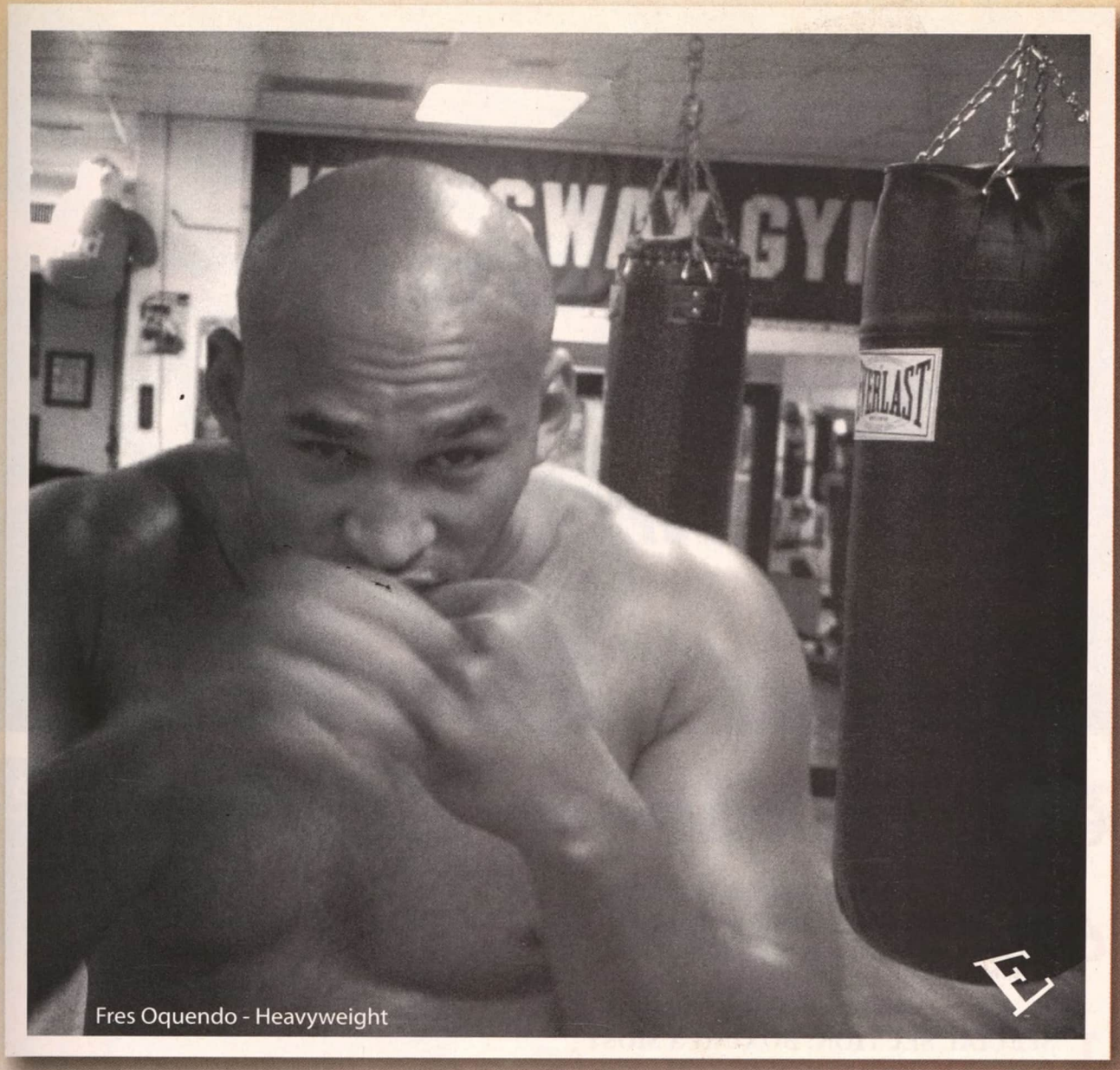

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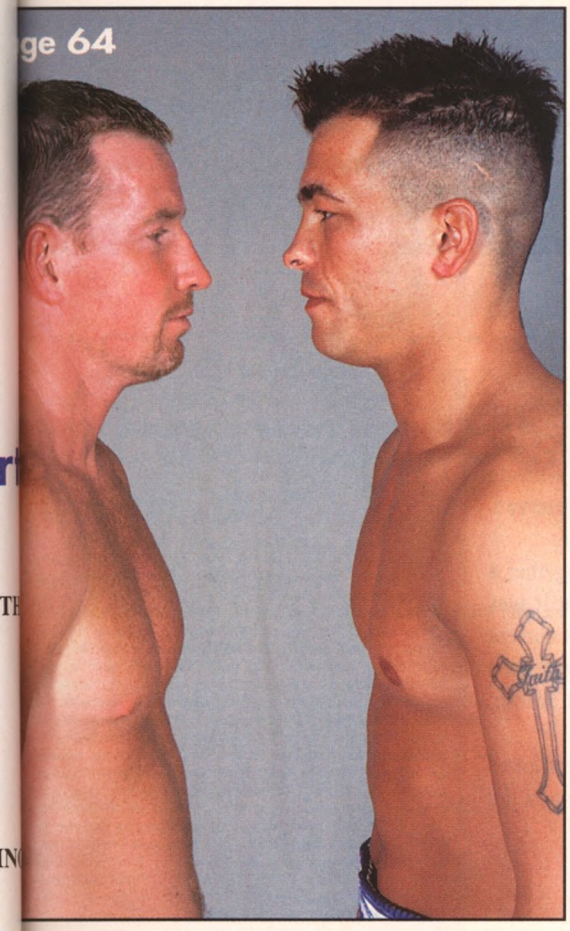

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RINGSIDE

It's rare that one of your heroes becomes a friend, but that's what happened to Jack McKinney and me. I grew up reading his boxing and football coverage in the *Philadelphia Daily News* and listening to his pioneering radio show, *Night Talk*. And like virtually everybody within the sound of his gravely voice, I was blown away by his astonishing depth of knowledge. Jack was both street savvy and book smart, the kind of guy who could cover opera one night and a fight the next, and be equally at home in both milieus.

Earlier this month I had the sad duty of writing Jack's obituary *(page 9)*, and as I did so, I realized there was no way I could encapsulate his incredible career in a half-page obit, or explain what he meant to me on a personal level.

Jack McKinney was without a doubt the best boxing writer the City of Brotherly Love ever had, and that alone says a helluva lot. But to simply call Jack a newspaperman or a radio personality would be to sell him short. He was an incredible larger-than-life character with as much physical and intellectual courage as anybody I've ever known. He devoured life and brought unbridled enthusiasm and integrity to everything he tackled.

There was a time when damned near every boxing writer in the country was on the take, but not Jack. When the promoter of the first fight he covered tried to slip him some money, Jack not only told him where he could shove it, but also informed him that he would never cover another of his fights if he ever tried to bribe him again. That ended the decades-long pay-me-to-read-me sleaze in Philly and set the tone for Jack's tenure as a boxing writer.

By the time I met Jack, he'd moved from the sports section to the editorial page, but he still kept in close contact with the Sweet Science. A year or so later, I was trying to wrangle a book contract, but the publisher wanted to see the first chapter before committing. I knew I had to come up with something eye-catching, and decided to write about Sonny Liston. For help, I turned to Jack, Liston's friend, confidant, and sometimes sparring partner.

Jack not only freely shared his intimate knowledge of Liston with me, he opened doors that led to revealing conversations with some of Sonny's old cronies, guys who normally wouldn't give a writer the time of day.

I wrote the chapter, got the contract, and when the book was published, Jack wrote a review. There were lots of reviews, most of them pretty favorable, but Jack wrote the only one that delved into the literary quality of my prose—such as it was—lifting my meager effort by paying it far more serious attention than it probably deserved. Coming from him, it meant more to me than all the royalty checks put together.

I'll never be in Jack's league as a writer or a man, but if I've cobbled together a few decent articles, it's because he inspired me. If a man like Jack thought it was important work, well, that was more than enough for me. And if THE RING's current crusade to return integrity to championship boxing resonates with boxing lovers, they should know I spearheaded the effort in part because Jack taught me that, win or lose, the good fight is always worth fighting.

There was as much laughter as tears at Jack's memorial service. One speaker joked that Jack was his best friend, but now he understood that everybody else thought the same thing. I'm privileged to have been among the many.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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The Ring

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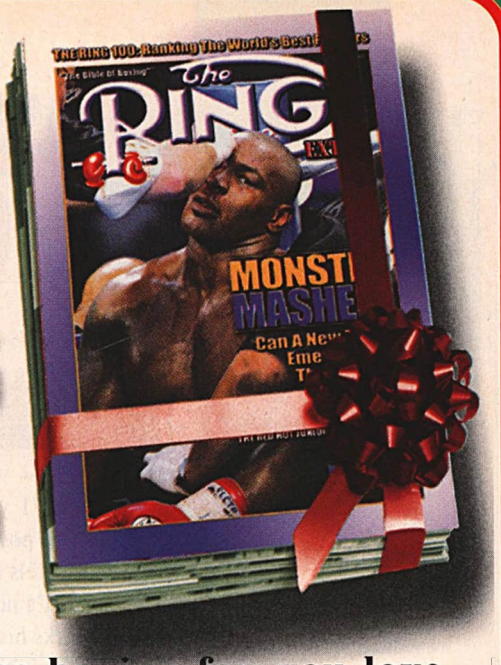

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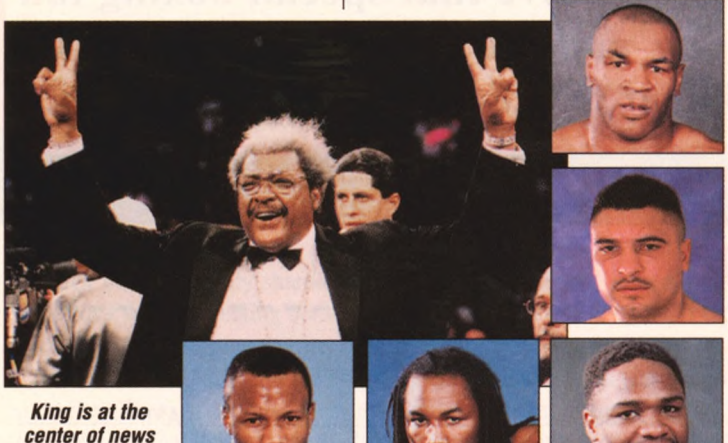
ROUND ONE

KING'S UNSTABLE STABLE

You're 71 years old, you have enough money to last you three lifetimes, and you're the m famous and powerful promoter in the sport of boxing. No one would blame you if you chose to r on your laurels and put your business on auto-pilot until your days are done.

But that's not Don King's style. Love him or hate him, you have to admit the Hall of Fame p moter works his septuagenarian butt off, and he continued to wheel and deal in a wild end to the su mer that saw him sign (or at least try to sign) two major fighters, go to court with one of his o fighters, open talks to do business with Mike Tyson for the first time in more than five years, and essence, buy a belt from the heavyweight champion of the world.

King's assault on the headlines began on August 5, when he announced the signing of top jun welterweight contender Zab Judah to a three-year contract. Unfortunately for King, Main Eve Judah's promoters since he turned pro in 1996, insisted Judah had 15 months left on his contract w them. While King has spoken of putting Judah in intriguing fights with dangerous 140-pound c tenders DeMarcus Corley and Diobelys Hurtado, no fights were signed as of press time and Juda promotional rights remained uncertain pending litigation.



King is at the center of news involving (clockwise fom top) Tyson, Ruiz, Byrd, Lewis, and Judah

Ten days later, on August 15, King announced the sign of Chris Byrd, the IBF's number-one rated heavyweight. T time, the deal was done with the full cooperation of the fi er's former promoter, Cedric Kushner Promotions, thou none of the specifics of the agreement with Kushner or length of Byrd's new contract were released.

A week later, on August 22, King continued to prove nea unbeatable in the courtroom when one of his top hea weights, John Ruiz, was denied a restraining order that wo have allowed "The Quiet Man" to arrange a fight with Ty without King's involvement. King and Tyson's acrimoni recent history (which includes a $100-million lawsuit filed Tyson and a countersuit filed by King) made Ruiz' peo doubtful that King would act in Ruiz' best interests and m the fight and the possible $10-million payday for Ruiz happ King insisted, however, that he was working on the fight, Tyson adviser Shelly Finkel confirmed that he'd been in talks with DK. Although judge Laura Ta Swain denied Ruiz' request for a restraining order, a trial was scheduled to go ahead on September

On September 5, however, the entire heavyweight picture changed when the real champ Lennox Lewis, announced that he had vacated the IBF belt rather than face Byrd. Lewis was c vinced to do so by King, who gave the champ $1-million and a new SUV so that Byrd and anot King fighter, Evander Holyfield, could fight for the vacant strap. Meanwhile, King announced intention to match WBA beltholder Ruiz with light heavy champ Roy Jones, with the winner to p sibly meet the Byrd-Holyfield winner in a "unification" match.

It's all very impressive work by King in his efforts to control the heavyweight title, but the t of the matter is that unless King signs Lewis to a contract, he's controlling nothing more than a c ple of belts.

—Eric Ras

MY PLANE CRASH WITH ARUM

Arum had something new to scream about when his plane went down

The short trip to Big Bear Lake, California, was nearing an end. My co-worker at the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, veteran boxing columnist Royce Feour, remarked that we were about to have a perfect on-time arrival for our flight from Las Vegas.

Feour and I, along with Top Rank President Bob Arum and Mandalay Bay hotel executives Scott Voeller and H.C. Rowe, were on our way to Big Bear on a Cessna Citation 550 twin engine jet to visit Oscar De La Hoya's training camp. De La Hoya was holding a media day to hype his fight with Fernando Vargas, and we were minutes from touching down.

When Feour noted that we were almost exactly on time, I first glanced at my watch. It was exactly 11:15 a.m. Facing the back of the jet, I looked out my window and noted we were at tree level. I turned to my right to answer Feour, but before I could say anything, Voeller shouted to hang on. There was a tremendous jolt, and I hit my head on something. We had a series of smaller bounces, as it seemed like the pilot was unable to stop or even slow the plane, and then one more big jolt.

As we finally came to a halt, Feour was bent backward at the waist, splayed across the aisle to his left. His head was on my right leg, his body over the aisle, but he was still touching his seat. I was wondering why he wasn't getting off me, but I was snapped out of that when Voeller yelled that the plane was on fire.

Without thinking, I pushed Feour onto his seat and quickly turned to my right and exited the plane, behind co-pilot Craig T. Terry and Rowe. As I waited for Feour, I noticed the wings of the plane were on fire.

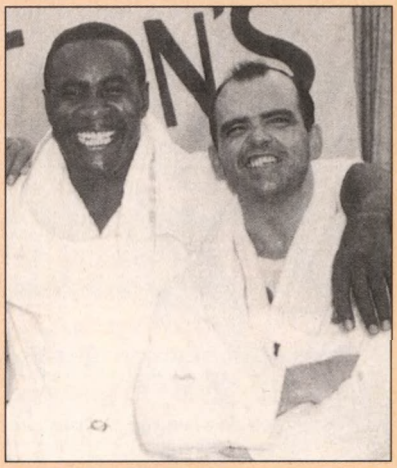
Feour was moving slowly and unsteadily. I yanked him by the wrist out of the plane so that Arum, Voeller, and pilot Joseph B. Topham could exit.

Seconds after the last person was off—no more than 30 seconds—there was a booming sound and the plane exploded. The entire craft was on fire. It was consumed in less than 10 minutes.

Fortunately, no one was seriously hurt. Feour was taken by ambulance to the hospital, but was treated and released. I had a sore neck for a few days, Arum a sore hamstring. All in all, though, we were lucky. Very, very lucky.

—Kevin Iole

JACK McKINNEY, 1928-2002



The fearless McKinney with sparring partner Liston

During his 40-year career as a writer and broadcaster, Jack McKinney covered practically every conceivable topic from classical music to world affairs. A true Renaissance man, he could sing operatic arias, recite Shakespeare, and hold forth—at great length—on practically any subject under the sun. He virtually invented talk radio in the 1960s, when *Night Talk*, broadcast by WCAU in Philadelphia, helped turn McKinney into a local celebrity.

McKinney loved to be in the thick of things. Writing for the *Philadelphia Daily News*, he went behind the lines with rebels in El Salvador and the IRA in Northern Ireland, parachuted out of a plane, and went into a cage full of lions armed with a whip and chair. But perhaps McKinney's most famous exploit was having a pro fight during his tenure as a boxing writer.

A political progressive and champion of the social underdog, McKinney befriended Sonny Liston when the ex-con lived in Philadelphia, eventually becoming the only writer that Liston truly trusted. McKinney, a legendary barroom brawler, worked out and sparred with Liston. "There was fear in Sonny Liston's eyes," McKinney wrote, "fear he was going to kill me."

McKinney always wanted to test his mettle in a real bout, so in July '63, promoter Don Elbaum arranged a match with Alvin Green in Painesville, Ohio, which McKinney won via first-round knockout.

"Jack was the last of the writer-adventurers who got involved in things," said HBO boxing analyst Larry Merchant, who, during his years as sports editor for the *Philadelphia Daily News*, was responsible for bringing music critic McKinney into the sports department, where, in the words of *Daily News* editor Zack Stalberg, he covered boxing, pro football, and track "intimately, passionately, and completely."

—Nigel Collins

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESUL
8-9-02	Tokunbo Olajide KO 5 Gary Jones	ESPN2	jm	B-	C+	B-
Olajide looking more and more like a can't-miss prospect						
8-9-02	**Miguel Barrera W 12 Roberto Leyva**	**Telef**	**IBF s**	**A**	**B+**	**A**
Barrera's late surge the difference in scintillating war						
8-16-02	Ravea Springs W 10 Kelvin Davis	ESPN2	c	C	B+	C+
Note to Davis: It's the young Tyson you want to emulate, not the current one						
8-17-02	Daniel Santos W 12 Takaloo	Show	jm	B	B-	C
Santos rebounds from fourth-round knockdown to outpoint Takaloo						
8-17-02	Joe Calzaghe W 12 Miguel Jimenez	Show	sm	A	D+	D
Just when we start thinking Calzaghe really is the goods, he turns in another stinker						
8-17-02	Jermain Taylor W 10 Sam Hill	HBO	sm	C+	B-	D-
What, if the guy has two good eyes, Hill forgets how to punch?						
8-17-02	David Tua KO 1 Michael Moorer	HBO	h	B+	B-	B-
It's the chin, stupid						
8-18-02	James Toney KO 7 Jason Robinson	FOXSN	c	B+	C+	B
The best Toney we've seen in years; bring on Jirov!						
8-23-02	Rhoshii Wells KO 2 Bernard Gray	ESPN2	m	C+	F	D-
It's great, isn't it, that Don King is promoting some FNF *cards now?*						
8-23-02	Cory Spinks Tech. Win 7 Rafael Pineda	ESPN2	w	B	B	C-
If Spinks couldn't see, how'd he know who was asking him if he could see?						
8-24-02	Juan Diaz W 10 Peter Nieves	Show	l	C+	B+	B-
Any fight that doesn't end with Diaz blubbering on camera is a good fight for Diaz						
8-24-02	Kermit Cintron KO 2 Ian MacKillop	Show	w	C+	B-	C
The last time we saw a fighter this intimidated, Bruce Seldon was getting knocked out by a right to the hair						
8-24-02	Nelson Dieppa Tech. Draw 2 Jhon Molina	Show	jfl	B+	B-	D
Where have all the fight doctors gone who thought hairline cuts were nothing?						
8-24-02	**Derrick Gainer Tech. Draw 2 Daniel Seda**	**Show**	**WBA f**	**A**	**B**	**D**
Anyone else notice the cut stopped bleeding as soon as Gainer's corner dabbed it with a towel?						
8-30-02	Brian Viloria W 12 Javier Lagos	ESPN2	fl	C+	D+	D-
Okay, maybe it wasn't Viloria's fault, but that didn't make it any easier to watch						
8-30-02	Rocky Juarez KO 6 Ivan Alvarez	Telef	f	B-	B+	B+
Juarez excellent in victory over solid guy who usually lasts the distance						
9-6-02	**Eric Lucas W 12 Omar Sheika**	**ESPN2**	**WBC sm**	**B+**	**B**	**C+**
Super middle becoming a division of white guys who can fight a little						
9-6-02	Orlando Salido W 10 Carlos Gerena	Telef	l	B-	B-	B+
Upset! Salido battles hard down the stretch to outwork favored Gerena						
9-6-02	Hector Camacho Jr. W 12 Arturo Urena	Telem	w	C+	B-	C
How unpopular is Camacho? Even his old man never needed a police escort from the ring						
9-7-02	**Winky Wright W Disq. 8 Bronco McKart**	**HBO**	**IBF jm**	**A-**	**B-**	**D+**
What do you do when you just can't beat the other guy? Quit without really quitting						
9-7-02	**Roy Jones KO 6 Clinton Woods**	**HBO**	**World lh**	**A+**	**F**	**B-**
Hate him if you want to; Jones does things that no other fighter can do						

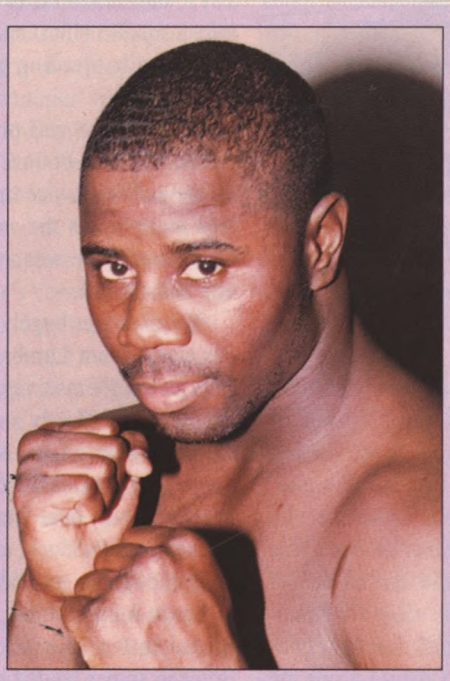
Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super m dleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior wel weight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweig

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo

FATE DEFEATS NATE



Jones had to call it a career

Nate Jones had high expectations for his boxing career. Armed with an Olympic bronze medal, he expected to join 1996 U.S. teammates Floyd Mayweather, Fernando Vargas, David Reid, and Eric Morel on the fast track to riches and glory.

Six years later, it all came crashing down. Not at the hands of Lennox Lewis, which is how Jones would have preferred it, but rather from the results of extensive neurological testing that determined that Jones has diminished memory, reflexes, and speech.

The advice was immediate retirement. Jones heeded it.

"I thought I would get to fight for the heavyweight championship of the world," Jones said. "I thought I would be able to help my family financially. None of that ever happened. I'm depressed, of course. I never got to fight the big names; I never got to make the real decent money. But it came to an end. I fought hard, but I never got an opportunity to get in a real big fight."

Jones retired in June, two months before his 30th birthday, after three weeks of testing at a Chicago hospital. He underwent the testing voluntarily after acknowledging changes in motor functions over the last year and several months of prolonged numbness on his right side. Every time he got hit with a good shot, his right leg would give, he said. And those good shots seemed to come more frequently, from lesser sparring partners.

"I was sparring one day with a couple of guys who couldn't really hit and they were rocking me," Jones said. "Then everybody seemed to be hitting a little harder. My right side was dead. I would get hit with any decent shot, and my leg just wouldn't hold."

Jones, 18-2-1 (10), briefly held a regional title until a disputed decision loss to Friday Ahunanya in March 2001. Jones had a chance to move back up the ladder against Lamon Brewster in February '02. Jones had defeated Brewster in the 1996 U.S. Olympic Trials, but the three-round whipping he absorbed when they met in Reading, Pennsylvania, was the worst performance of his career.

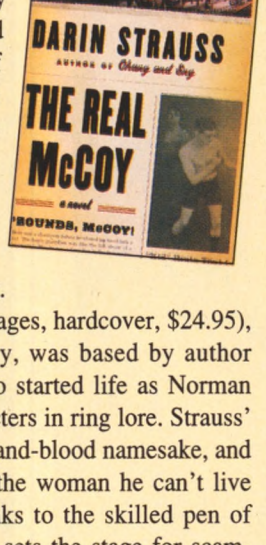
An April three-round exhibition with Chris Byrd in Rosemont, Illinois, was stopped after two rounds because Jones—a Chicago native—appeared almost disinterested, although the neurology results two months later proved it was much more than sloth.

Jones had won two fights in 2001, but said he began feeling numbness in his right side before the end of the year.

"I was scared to say anything," Jones said of his attitude prior to the important Brewster fight. "The thing I don't understand is why this happened to me, because I never was a guy who took a lot of big shots. But I always sparred a lot. Especially recently. I always wanted to be on top of my game in case something came up. I sparred everybody—Lennox, Oliver McCall, Chris Byrd—I didn't care, I'd spar anybody. Sometimes I fought like I couldn't be hurt. That could be part of my problem today."

—David Mayo

BOXING BOOKSHELF BONUS



Before he took an overdose of sleeping pills because he could not "endure this world's madness," Charles "Kid" McCoy is said to have penned an unpublished autobiography called *Life Jabs Back*. If the man, whose trickery in the ring paled only next to his tumultuous life outside of it (McCoy did time for manslaughter), was more forthright in his memoir than he was conning Tommy Ryan into giving him a welterweight title shot in 1896, that would be a book worth reading.

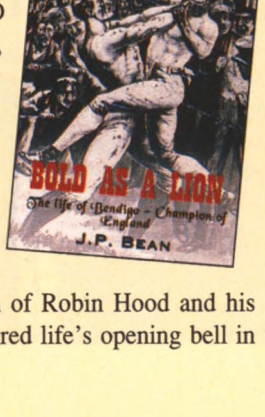
So is *The Real McCoy* (Dutton, 326 pages, hardcover, $24.95), a novel whose protagonist, Virgil Selby, was based by author Darin Strauss on the real-life boxer who started life as Norman Selby and became one of the great characters in ring lore. Strauss' McCoy is even dastardlier than his flesh-and-blood namesake, and his at-all-costs pursuit of notoriety and the woman he can't live without is hugely entertaining fare thanks to the skilled pen of Strauss. The scene in which his McCoy sets the stage for scamming Ryan out of the title, for instance, is as much fun as watching Teddy Atlas and Max Kellerman pretend to get along on *Friday Night Fights:*

"Ryan tilted his head. He breathed in through his nose and out again—his big eyes trained on McCoy. Then he started into the faintest of smiles. There it was: the sucker's Smirk. It often turns up in the eye first, a flicky show of happiness. Next it skates down the jaw, wavering near the mouth like a bee around a hive, and soon it riffles under the flesh to shiver the chin. In a good flimflam the sucker's whole face will burst like a potato when it's cooked."

Don't expect historical verisimilitude. For instance, "The Bible Of Boxing" didn't arrive on the scene until 1922, but THE RING appears once or twice in the turn-of-the-century narrative.

McCoy's final attempted scam is so preposterous that it seems like an overreach both on his and Strauss' part. But overall this is a novel boxing fans should enjoy as long as they don't take it as gospel, even though the real Kid McCoy, who once put a sack over his head and boxed as "The Masked Marvel," would probably be delighted to have them do just that.

—Pete Ehrmann



Readers fascinated with boxing's bare knuckles era will welcome J.P. Bean's absorbing new biography, *Bold As A Lion: The Life Of Bendigo—Champion Of England* (D & D Publications, 221 pages, paperback, £9.95), a well-researched look at both its colorful protagonist and the times he lived in.

Born William Thompson, "Bendigo" (Bean provides several versions of how he got his nickname) grew up in the central English city of Nottingham. But this was not the lush green Nottingham of Robin Hood and his Merry Men. By the time Bendigo answered life's opening bell in 1811, the industrial revolution had turned much of Nottingh into a squalid slum, and like the teeming inner cities of toda was a fertile breeding ground for all sorts of hard men, inclu pugilists.

Although he was only a super middleweight by today's s dards, the 165-pound Bendigo only lost one fight in his l career and was twice the champion of England, which at the t was pretty much the same thing as being heavyweight champ of the world. He was a gifted athlete who also excelled as a cr eter and acrobat.

Bendigo was hugely popular with a gang of local toughs ca the Nottingham Lambs, who attended all of his fights, and oc interjected themselves into the proceedings, brawling with a supporters of Bendy's opponents and sometimes interfering n the bouts themselves. Not that their hero needed any help; he re a cunning and skillful boxer in an era populated with cr brawlers, and beat such well-known fighters as James "Da Burke, Tom Paddock, and arch-rival Ben Caunt.

Although he trained rigorously, between bouts Bendigo lo to booze it up with the Lambs, so it wasn't too surprising tha turned into a lush after his boxing career ended in 1850. F drunken sprees landed him in jail on a regular basis, but during 28th incarceration, he was moved by a sermon delivered by prison chaplain and gave up the bottle.

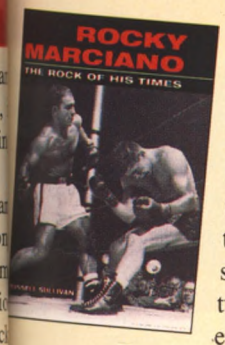
Sober for the first time in years, Bendigo hooked up wi revivalist preacher and soon became almost as big an attractio the evangelistic circuit as he'd been as a prize fighter. Althoug was illiterate and couldn't read the Bible, the old fighter touc the crowds with his simple and straightforward message. Ha adopt a fighting stance, point to his boxing trophies, and say, "o them cups, see them belts? I used to fight for them, but now I f for Christ."

Unlike so many heroes of the prize ring, Bendigo lived oug later years in relative comfort, dying as the result of a fall in th at age 69. Eleven years after his death, friends and fans raise money for a monument that still stands in St. Mary's bu ground in Nottingham.

Bean is not the innovative stylist that Bendigo was, but prose is clear, concise, and adds greatly to our knowledge o understanding of a larger-than-life character whose story is ve worth telling.

—Nigel Collar

The only heavyweight champion of the world to never lose fight, Rocky Marciano is batting 1.000 in the biography dep ment, too. In 1977, there was Everett Skehan's examination o life and career of "The Brockton Blockbuster," and now co lawyer Russell Sullivan with his own comprehensive brief ha puts the 1952-'55 titlist in both his proper fistic and sociolo context. *Rocky Marciano: The Rock Of His Times* (Universit Illinois Press, 348 pages, cloth, $34.95) is overall an excel look at the man who would have preferred to make a living wi baseball mitt instead of boxing gloves, and chose the latter after he didn't make the cut on the ball diamond. More importa ly, Sullivan tells us, Marciano turned to boxing at a relatively



age because the immigrant shoemaker's son was deathly afraid of winding up just another poor, unknown grunt.

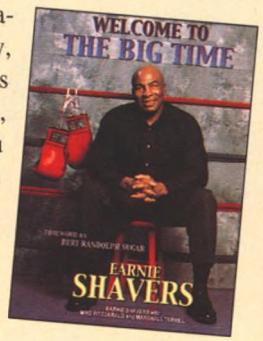
Sullivan's chronological depiction of Marciano has a little more style than its subject showed manager Al Weill and trainer Charley Goldman the first time they saw him in the ring. It's mostly straightforward, with an occasional nice turn of phrase that makes it a pleasant and entertaining read. Dispassionate observers won't argue too strenuously with the author's conclusion that, for all of Rocky's heart and indominability, it was Weill's connections and perhaps even the silent involvement of Frankie Carbo that kept Marciano's comet on its perfect trajectory. That's no slur on the 49-0 (43) career that made Marciano one of the all-time greats of the ring and an exemplar of the character and temper of his time, but merely a simple and not-really-so-daring judgment based on how the fight game operated (and who operated it) a half-century ago.

Less impressive and compelling is the sociological stuff, much of which (such as Sullivan's attempt to explain why descriptions of Marciano as "swarthy" were ethnic slurs) seems steeped in modern political correctness.

The portraits of Marciano's opponents are thoughtful and well-drawn (especially Ezzard Charles), but it's possible to argue with some of Counselor Sullivan's assertions ("The [heavyweight] title really acquired symbolic significance and supremacy in the sports world during the reign of Jack Dempsey in the '20s," which would come as a hell of a surprise to John L. Sullivan and Jim Jeffries, to name a couple) without ruling him out of order on the body of his work.

Sullivan's definitive portrait of a great fighter and good if quirky human being will do nicely until some enterprising investigative reporter uncovers the fortune Rocky hid in drain pipes and other secret spots whose locations went to his grave with him in 1969.

—Pete Ehrmann



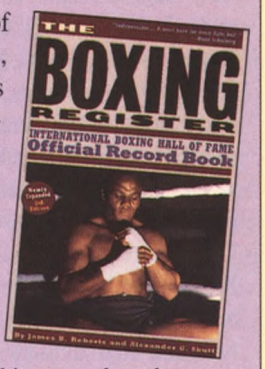
Don't look for any startling revelations in Earnie Shavers' autobiography, *Welcome To The Big Time* (Sports Publishing LLC, 245 pages, $22.95, hardcover). If you're a Shavers fan, you already remember him as arguably the hardest-hitting heavyweight in history, and you probably can recall in pretty good detail his fights with Muhammad Ali, Larry Holmes, and Ken Norton. Shavers and his ghost writers, Mike Fitzgerald and Marshall Terrill, who also helped Ken Norton pen his autobiography, cover those fights generously. But you still don't find out anything about them that you didn't know from watching the fights or reading newspaper or magazine accounts.

Still, you discover other things about Shavers that are interesting: the young Shavers' attraction to the underworld and violent crime; his frequent philandering and poor luck with finances; his politically incorrect view on America's welfare system and its recipients; and problems he had with the IRS. There's a lot too about Shavers' love/hate relationships with Don King and with several of Shavers' managers, particularly Blackie Gennaro and Dean Chance. Perhaps the book's best quality is the amount of attention and detail it gives to Shavers' early pro career, which you probably don't know a lot about if you're under 40.

That said, there's a vague blandness to the work that will leave some readers unsatisfied. It feels a little sanitized or over tended to by the lawyers—maybe a bit more so even than was Holmes' autobiography a few years ago. *Welcome To The Big Time* isn't as hard-hitting as Shavers was. Maybe it hits as hard as Oscar Bonavena. That's still a pretty fair read.

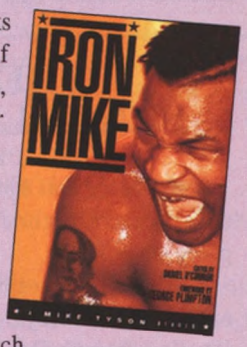
—William Dettloff

BRIEFLY NOTED:



If you've put off buying a copy of *The Boxing Register* (McBooks Press, 655 pages, paperback, $24.95), now is a good time to purchase this indispensable reference book. Why? Because authors James B. Roberts and Alexander G. Skutt have just published an expanded and updated third edition.

The Boxing Register is the official record book of the International Boxing Hall of Fame, and includes a bio, record, and several images of every fighter inducted into the IBHOF from 1989, when the first enshrinement took place, through the 2002 inductions. If you can only afford one record book, this is the one to get.



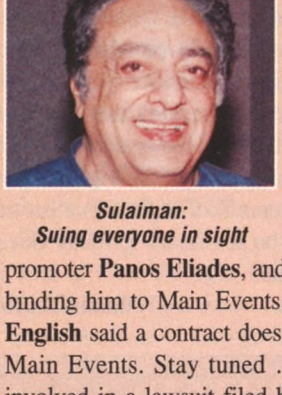
There have been quite a few books about Mike Tyson over the years, but if you're not sick of reading about him, *Iron Mike: A Mike Tyson Reader* (Thunder Mouth Press, 324 pages, paperback, $16.95) comes highly recommended.

Iron Mike consists of 34 pieces taken from various publications, so you may have read a few of them before. Most of the writing is topnotch. Among the all-star roster of writers: Hugh McIlvanney, June Jordan, Pete Dexter, Joyce Carol Oates, Robert Lipsyte, Katherine Dunn, and Michael Katz.

The selections by editor Daniel O'Connor trace Tyson's career from the early years with Cus D'Amato through Nevada's decision not to grant him a license to fight Lennox Lewis in Nevada. Taken as a whole, the collection is better than any of the individually written biographies of the deeply flawed former heavyweight champion.

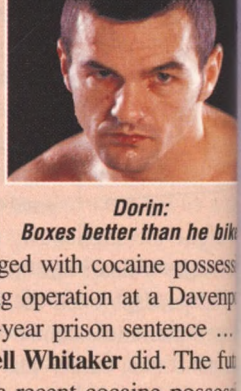
—NC

OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Sulaiman: Suing everyone in sight

The struggles of long-time promotional powerhouse Main Events worsened substantially in mid-August when heavyweight champion **Lennox Lewis** went to court seeking a declaration that he owes no contractual obligations to his American promoters. Lewis said his signature on a 1998 promotional agreement with Main Events was forged by former promoter **Panos Eliades**, and the champ said he has signed nothing binding him to Main Events since then. Main Events attorney **Pat English** said a contract does exist that obligates Lewis to fight for Main Events. Stay tuned … Lewis and Main Events are also involved in a lawsuit filed by WBC President **Jose Sulaiman** in early-August, seeking $56-million in damages for injuries sustained at the January press conference brawl between Lewis and **Mike Tyson**. Lewis, Tyson, Main Events, and Tyson's then-publicist, **Dan Klores** Associates, are all targets of the litigation … In other WBC news, in late-August the sanctioning body okayed the consumption of Gatorade and other similar sports drinks during WBC-sanctioned fights … Featherweight contender **Naseem Hamed** split from trainer **Oscar Suarez** in late-August, marking the third trainer "The Prince" has parted with in four years. According to Suarez, Naz wanted him to stop training **Acelino Freitas**, **Omar Sheika**, and the other fighters he currently works with so that Hamed could have him all to himself. Suarez refused, marking the latest blow to Hamed's free-falling career … Hamed victim **Augie Sanchez** was denied a boxing license by the Nevada State Athletic Commission in late-July. The NSAC cited Sanchez' brutal kayo loss to Hamed and his one-punch flattening at the hands **John Michael Johnson** as evidence that the ease with which he can be severely concussed makes him unfit to fight … Another Sanchez was deemed unfit to fight recently. **Agapito Sanchez,** who was scheduled to defend the WBO 122-pound title against **Joan Guzman** in mid-August, was stripped of the belt a few days before the bout because doctors detected cataracts in the Dominican boxer's eyes. Sanchez intends to have an operation and hopes to fight again … Former middleweight and super middle titlist **Michael Nunn** was arrested and charged with cocaine possess in late-July, the victim of an FBI sting operation at a Davenp Iowa, motel. Nunn could face a five-year prison sentence ... maybe Nunn will get lucky like **Pernell Whitaker** did. The fu Hall of Famer avoided jail time for a recent cocaine possess charge, getting a four-year suspended sentence instead … Ba wishes for a speedy recovery go out to former welterweight cha pion **Curtis Cokes**, who was hospitalized after suffering a mu stroke in late-August. Cokes, who trains heavyweight Ka **Johnson**, seemed in good spirits a few days later when he jo that Johnson's performance against **John Ruiz** was one of the ca es of his health problems … WBA lightweight titlist **Leon** h **Dorin** broke his arm in a bicycling accident in late-August an r expected to be out of action until January … South African ju e lightweight **Wiseman Jim**, 29, was found dead in his gym in lo July, reportedly having hanged himself. Little was known ex i that Jim, 10-1-2 (6), was rumored to have had family problems Respected San Antonio, Texas-based promoter **Tony Padilla** d in a nursing home in mid-August at the age of 87. Padilla promo major fights throughout the 1950s, '60s, and '70s at Munic Auditorium, Freeman Coliseum, and HemisFair Arena, includ the 1979 WBC featherweight title fight between **Danny Lopez** i **Mike Ayala**.



Dorin: Boxes better than he bik

THE PUNCHLINES

"If I look real hard at Vargas' chin, there's a good chance he's going down."

—Floyd Mayweather Sr., trainer of Oscar De La Hoya, prior to De La Hoya's fight with Fernando Vargas

"The odds are in my favor. It can't happen twice in the same day."

—Promoter Bob Arum, prior to flying back from Big Bear to Las Vegas after his plane crashed earlier in the day

AL KRATZER'S VIEW

The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. BERNARD HOPKINS
   Middleweight
2. ROY JONES
   Light Heavyweight
3. MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA
   Featherweight
4. VERNON FORREST
   Welterweight
5. OSCAR DE LA HOYA
   Junior Middleweight
6. KOSTYA TSZYU
   Junior Welterweight
7. FLOYD MAYWEATHER
   Lightweight
8. LENNOX LEWIS
   Heavyweight
9. ERIK MORALES
   Featherweight
10. SHANE MOSLEY
    Junior Middleweight

(For period ended September 15, 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: David Tua advances from sixth to fourth following his first-round kayo of Michael Moorer, which pushes John Ruiz (fourth last issue) and Jameel McCline (fifth last issue) down one spot each.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: James Toney, who made the cruiser limit of 190 pounds for the first time since 1997, enters at number five on the strength of his seventh-round knockout of Jason Robinson. Vincenzo Cantatore (10th last issue) exits to make room for Toney, while everybody else below the fifth position moves down one slot.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Clinton Woods (10th last issue) is gone following his kayo loss to Roy Jones. George Jones takes his place.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Eric Lucas' clear-cut decision over Omar Sheika elevates the Canadian from sixth to fourth. Lucas' advancement pushes Byron Mitchell (fourth last issue) and Charles Brewer (formerly fifth) down to fifth and sixth, respectively. Thomas Tate (seventh last issue) departs, making room for Anthony Mundine at number 10. The reshuffling also moves up Mads Larsen (eighth last issue), Manuel Siaca (ninth last issue), and Markus Beyer (10th last issue) one rung each.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Armand Krajnc (fourth last issue) is removed after suffering a kayo loss to previously unranked Sergey Tatevosyan and then announcing his retirement due to blood clots on his brain. Tatevosyan enters in the number-seven position, while Antonio Perugino (fifth last issue), Robert Allen (sixth last issue), and Tito Mendoza (seventh last issue) move up one spot each due to Krajnc's departure.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Oscar De La Hoya (first last issue) wins THE RING's recognition as world champion at 154 pounds with his kayo of Fernando Vargas (second last issue). Vargas remains the number-two contender, while Winky Wright (third last issue) takes over the number-one spot. Bronco McKart (fifth last issue) drops to seventh following his DQ loss to Wright. Former lightweight and welterweight titleholder Shane Mosley has informed THE RING that he will now be campaigning as a junior middle, and he has been installed at number five. Daniel Santos (fifth last issue) climbs to fourth following his points verdict over Takaloo. Santiago Samaniego replaces Rhoshii Wells at number 10, thanks to his kayo of Mamadou Thiam.

WELTERWEIGHTS: With Mosley now fighting at 154, everybody rated below him last issue moves up one notch each, while newcomer Jawaid Khaliq is aboard at number 10.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Artur Grigorian (eighth last issue) switches places with Raul Balbi (seventh last issue) following Grigorian's win over Stefano Zoff.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Sirimongkol Singmanassak crashes the rankings at number seven after knocking out Kengo Nagashima. Also new is Nate Campbell at number 10, while Daniel Attah (ninth last issue) and Jorge Barrios (10th last issue) depart to make room.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Daniel Seda (10th last issue) was lucky to escape with a technical draw vs. sixth-ranked Derrick Gainer, and has been dropped. Returning to fill the void is William Abelyan.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Agapito Sanchez (ninth last issue) departs after failing an eye examination. His exit allows Jose Luis Valbuena (10th last issue) to move up to ninth, and Joan Guzman to enter at number 10.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: Mzukisi Sikali crashes the rankings at number four on the strength of his decision over Hawk Makepula (fourth last issue). Makepula slips to fifth. Sikali's emergence forces everybody below fifth down one spot. Damaen Kelly (10th last issue) is gone for the time being.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: De La Hoya's outstanding performance against Vargas elevates him from 10th to fifth. Everybody previously rated below fourth drops down one spot. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended September 15, 2002

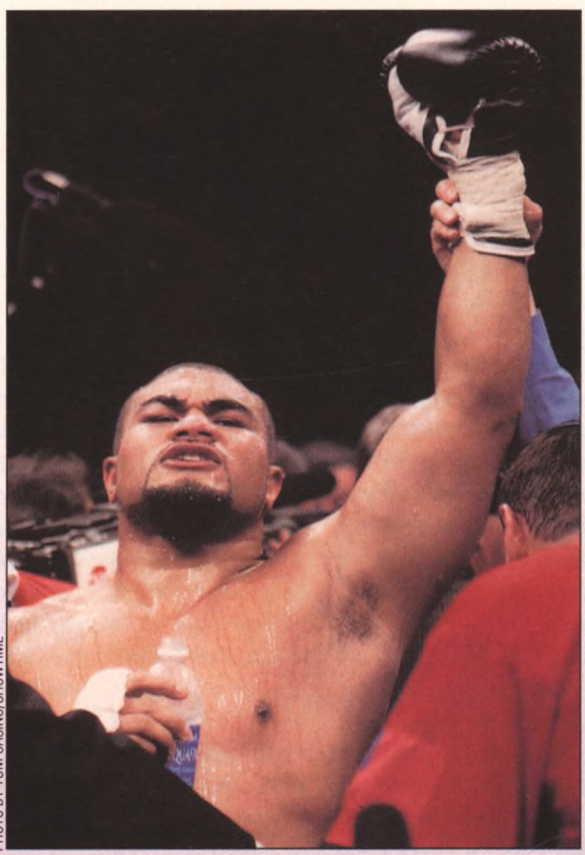


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Hard-hitting David Tua climbed two spots at heavyweight

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors
Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: LENNOX LEWIS
England 40-2-1 (31)

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 39-1 (36)
2. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 35-2 (20)
3. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD**
Fairburn, GA 38-5-2 (25)
4. **DAVID TUA**
New Zealand 41-3 (36)
5. **JOHN RUIZ**
Chelsea, MA 38-4-1 (27)
6. **JAMEEL McCLINE**
Port Jefferson, NY 28-2-3 (16)
7. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 35-4 (29)
8. **KIRK JOHNSON**
Canada 32-1-1 (23)
9. **MIKE TYSON**
Catskill, NY 49-4 (43)
10. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 31-1 (30)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: OSCAR DE LA HOYA
Whittier, CA 35-2 (28)

1. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 44-3 (25)
2. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 22-2 (20)
3. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 54-5 (36)
4. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 26-2-1 (20)
5. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 38-2 (35)
6. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 16-1-1 (11)
7. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 45-4 (29)
8. **ALEX BUNEMA**
Dallas, TX 20-3-2 (12)
9. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 33-8-1 (18)
10. **SANTIAGO SAMANIEGO**
Panama 36-6-1 (29)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA
Mexico 55-3 (39)

1. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 41-1 (31)
2. **NASEEM HAMED**
England 36-1 (31)
3. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 60-12 (27)
4. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
Albuquerque, NM 52-2-2 (28)
5. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 39-2 (31)
6. **DERRICK GAINER**
Pensacola, FL 38-5-1 (24)
7. **FRANKIE TOLEDO**
Paterson, NJ 42-6-1 (17)
8. **JULIO PABLO CHACON**
Argentina 44-2 (31)
9. **LEHLO LEDWABA**
South Africa 33-2-1 (22)
10. **WILLIAM ABELYAN**
Glendale, CA 20-4-1 (11)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: PAULIE AYALA
Ft. Worth, TX 34-1 (12)*

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 34-2-1 (25)
2. **BONES ADAMS**
Henderson, KY 41-5-3 (19)
3. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 45-3-1 (32)
4. **WILLIE JORRIN**
Sacramento, CA 28-0-1 (12)
5. **OSAMU SATO**
Japan 26-1-2 (15)
6. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 28-1-1 (13)
7. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ**
Mexico 30-2-2 (21)
8. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 32-3 (24)
9. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA**
Venezuela 21-2-1 (12)
10. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 18-0 (14)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TIM AUSTIN**
Cincinnati, OH 25-0-1 (22)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 38-1-1 (27)
3. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
Denmark 52-2 (26)
4. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 28-3 (26)
5. **EIDY MOYA**
Venezuela 15-2 (8)
6. **ADAN VARGAS**
Mexico 37-4-1 (23)
7. **HERIBERTO RUIZ**
Mexico 26-1-2 (13)
8. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 27-3 (16)
9. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 22-3-2 (13)
10. **CRUZ CARBAJAL**
Mexico 21-11-1 (17)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 31-0 (27)
2. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 42-12-1 (28)
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
   France 28-2 (20)
4. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 17-0 (14)
5. **JAMES TONEY**
   Ann Arbor, MI 65-4-2 (42)
6. **EZRA SELLERS**
   Washington, D.C. 25-5 (23)
7. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 18-1-1 (17)
8. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 47-4 (23)
9. **ALEXANDRE GUROV**
   Ukraine 32-3-1 (27)
10. **JORGE CASTRO**
    Argentina 120-8-3 (84)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ROY JONES
Pensacola, FL 47-1 (38)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 20-1 (17)
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 47-0 (37)
3. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadephia, PA 21-2-1 (7)
4. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL 43-3 (29)
5. **REGGIE JOHNSON**
   Houston, TX 42-7-1 (24)
6. **BRUNO GIRARD**
   France 42-2-2 (7)
7. **DAVID TELESCO**
   Port Chester, NY 26-3 (21)
8. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 30-1 (20)
9. **LOU DEL VALLE**
   Bronx, NY 31-3-1 (21)
10. **GEORGE JONES**
    Paterson, NJ 18-1 (13)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 34-0 (27)
2. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 28-0 (6)
3. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 29-4-1 (26)
4. **ERIC LUCAS**
   Canada 36-4-3 (13)
5. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 25-1-1 (18)
6. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 38-9 (27)
7. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 40-1 (34)
8. **MANUEL SIACA**
   Puerto Rico 16-4 (15)
9. **MARKUS BEYER**
   Germany 26-1 (11)
10. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
    Australia 15-1 (12)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 41-2-1 (30)

1. **HARRY SIMON**
   Namibia 23-0 (17)
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 33-2-1 (24)
3. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 32-1 (29)
4. **ANTONIO PERUGINO**
   Italy 21-0 (7)
5. **ROBERT ALLEN**
   Atlanta, GA 33-4 (24)
6. **TITO MENDOZA**
   Panama 27-4 (20)
7. **SERGEY TATEVOSYAN**
   Russia 16-3 (12)
8. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France 32-6-1 (20)
9. **RODNEY JONES**
   Lafayette, LA 26-3 (16)
10. **ERLAND BETARE**
    France 35-7-2 (16)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: VERNON FORREST
Atlanta, GA 35-0 (26)

1. **RICARDO MAYORGA**
   Nicaragua 24-3-1 (22)
2. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 26-3 (18)
3. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 30-0 (24)
4. **ANDREW LEWIS**
   Guyana 21-1-1 (19)
5. **ANTONIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 37-4 (26)
6. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 21-10 (16)
7. **CORY SPINKS**
   St. Louis, MO 30-2 (11)
8. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO**
   Italy 37-1 (23)
9. **DANNY PEREZ**
   El Cajon, CA 27-2 (17)
10. **JAWAID KHALIQ**
    England 19-1-1 (12)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 29-1-1 (23)

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 49-3 (29)
2. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 28-1 (21)
3. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 27-1-1 (16)
4. **MICKY WARD**
   Lowell, MA 38-11 (27)
5. **DIOBELYS HURTADO**
   Miami, FL 35-2-1 (23)
6. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 34-6 (28)
7. **JESSE JAMES LEIJA**
   San Antonio, TX 43-5-2 (17)
8. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 30-1 (10)
9. **BEN TACKIE**
   Ghana 24-3 (15)
10. **OMAR WEIS**
    Argentina 35-4-3 (16)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: FLOYD MAYWEATHER
Grand Rapids, MI 28-0 (20)

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 46-5-1 (42)
2. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 34-2-1 (16)
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA**
   Pittsburgh, PA 35-0 (14)
4. **LEONARD DORIN**
   Canada 21-0 (7)
5. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 30-2-1 (23)
6. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN 40-6-1 (29)
7. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 35-0 (22)
8. **RAUL BALBI**
   France 48-6-1 (33)
9. **ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ**
   Mexico 48-5-1 (33)
10. **COLIN DUNNE**
    England 37-1 (26)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 32-0 (29)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 27-1 (17)
3. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 37-2 (26)
4. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV 21-1 (5)
5. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
   Thailand 36-2-1 (33)
6. **PHILLIP NDOU**
   South Africa 28-1 (27)
7. **SIRIMONGKOL SINGMANASSAK**
   Thailand 38-1 (22)
8. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
   Bellflower, CA 37-3-1 (23)
9. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
   South Africa 27-1 (15)
10. **NATE CAMPBELL**
    Jacksonville, FL 22-0 (20)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 27-2-1 (8)
2. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 23-0 (23)
3. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 24-0-1 (18)
4. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 22-3-1 (11)
5. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines 46-4-2 (31)
6. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
   Mexico 21-1 (13)
7. **JESUS ROJAS**
   Venezuela 35-9-3 (19)
8. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 28-3-1 (18)
9. **IN JOO CHO**
   Korea 18-2 (7)
10. **LUIS BOLANO**
    Colombia 36-0 (28)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 45-2 (25)
2. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 31-0 (17)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 26-0 (20)
4. **MZUKISI SIKALI**
   South Africa 27-4-2 (16)
5. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
   South Africa 20-2 (13)
6. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand 42-1 (14)
7. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 12-1-2 (8)
8. **PETER CULSHAW**
   England 21-1-1 (12)
9. **GERSON GUERRERO**
   Mexico 25-4 (19)
10. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
    Argentina 12-0-1 (7)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Mexico 50-0-1 (37)
2. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua 31-2-1 (20)
3. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 30-3-1 (22)
4. **BEBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 28-1 (23)
5. **PICHIT SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 25-2 (12)
6. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 19-2-2 (11)
7. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 24-2 (13)
8. **HIDENOBU HONDA**
   Japan 24-1 (12)
9. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO**
   Mexico 66-8-4 (30)
10. **ZOLANI PETELO**
    South Africa 17-3-2 (9)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 27-1-1 (17)
2. **MIGUEL BARRERA**
   Colombia 19-0-2 (11)
3. **ROBERTO LEYVA**
   Mexico 21-1-1 (18)
4. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 48-2-2 (17)
5. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 18-2-1 (10)
6. **KEITARO HOSHINO**
   Japan 22-8 (5)
7. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 31-7-2 (22)
8. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 33-2 (20)
9. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 27-1 (21)
10. **KHULILE MAKEBA**
    South Africa 16-1 (9)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

OVERACHIEVERS ANONYMOUS

This hasn't been a banner year for ex-heavyweight champions who were best known for a) pulverizing power, b) vicious killer instincts, c) lawbreaking antics, d) eccentric hob and e) quotes that made the hairs on the back of your neck stand up stiffer than an Ea European heavyweight. First, Mike "I Like To Drive The Nose Bone Into The Brain" Tyson f himself busted up, on his back, and lisping words of praise for Lennox Lewis. Now, Micha Want To Break A Cheekbone To See What It Looks Like Pushed In" Moorer has been wha out by David Tua's right hand—yes, *right* hand—in a mere 30 seconds.

Thirty seconds! Do you realize that's not enough time to cook a pot of Minute Rice, dance *Minute Waltz*, or grill a minute steak? Let me put it another way: Suppose you have a motorm best buddy who fancies himself the modern-day Don Dunphy and yaps a mile a minute studying the Sweet Science from the prime vantage point of your La-Z-Boy. Well, if he decid babble from the opening bell all the way until the fight's conclusion, he'd have logged only a mile on the oral odometer before running out of stuff to say. That's how short a time span 30 onds is.

On the positive side, that's almost twice as long as poor John Ruiz lasted against Tua in

Moorer outpoints Holyfield to become first left-handed heavyweight champ

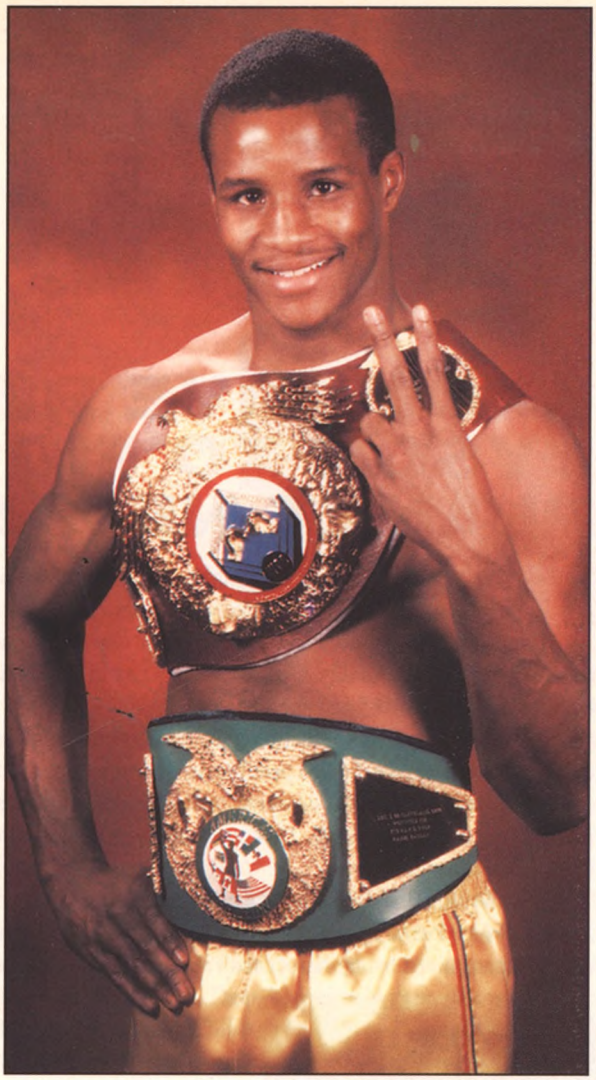
On the negative side, that's n long as plenty of other ex-he weight kings—no, not just Eva Holyfield and Hasim Rahman, also 53-year-old George Foreman 52-year-old Larry Holmes—w survive if they faced Tua tomor It's scary to think what might happened if Tua had cut loose more of his trademark killer left h right from the start against Moore

Regardless of what Moorer about not being finished, his da being a fighter who matters t ticket buyers, the TV viewers, an promoters who write the big ch are over. Right now, he has t paths to take, none of them partic ly satisfying for him. The fir retirement, his least likely cour action. The second is piling up against nobodies and hoping th seven- or eight-bout winning st will land him an important f again. And the third is serving

trophy scalp for contenders and young hopefuls climbing the ranks. Maybe, just maybe, *Moorer* becomes the guy Roy Jones deems safe enough to challenge at heavyweight.

In light of the Tua fight, it's going to be easy for the critics to apply their own crunch punch to Moorer's legacy, to bash him for blowing three years late in his career by partying and hanging out, point out that he hasn't beaten a top-level foe in six years, and remind everyone that he was the reason a 45-year-old fat guy was able to regain the most prestigious prize in sports in 1994 (via one-punch knockout, no less). But in reality, Moorer isn't the underachiever he was being portrayed as by much of the press long before he even took off his robe and touched gloves with Tua. In my mind, he's quite the opposite: an overachiever whose career has had as many look-at-thats as what-ifs.

To truly appreciate Moorer, you would have to have known him when he was a light heavyweight, which is when I first met him. He was a ferocious puncher at 175 pounds, but the scariest thing about him was his demeanor. He loved hurting people, and although many other fighters have said the same thing, he truly meant it.



Remember this skinny, young light heavyweight?

"Sometimes I think that I want to break a nose or a rib," he said one day as he spoke to me from his residence, a five-foot by seven-foot windowless room that was once used to store canned goods in trainer Emanuel Steward's basement, a room that Moorer's Kronk teammates called The Dungeon. "I want to break someone's jaw," he added. "I want to see it shift, see how their mouth hangs open."

Moorer didn't just talk like an assassin. He fought like one, too. He went 22-0 (22) as a light heavy, knocking out fellow powerhitters like Leslie Stewart, Jim MacDonald, and Fred Delgado before deciding to invade the much more lucrative heavyweight ranks. What's remarkable is that he became a successful, history-making heavyweight virtually overnight and after remaking his body exactly the way that every physician, nutritionist, sports fitness counselor, and septuagenarian fight trainer would tell you not to do it. Moorer put on 38 pounds in just six weeks by eating steak for breakfast and veal sandwiches for snacks, and making late-night trips to Detroit's finest fast food joints.

Though it was clear early on that Moorer didn't bring his punch up with him (his shots were heavy, but no longer had the snap to them), he knocked out tough heavies like Bert Cooper and Alex Stewart and decisioned Bonecrusher Smith. Then, three years and three days after making his heavyweight debut, he overcame an early knockdown and outpointed Holyfield to win the gem: the heavyweight crown.

You look at Moorer and see a guy who fell to Foreman. But you also see someone who dethroned Holyfield, a 31-year-old superstar who was coming off his biggest win ever at that point: a title-regaining, rematch decision over Riddick Bowe. In Moorer, you see a guy who was kayoed by Holyfield in a rematch. But Moorer is also someone who, after the Foreman disaster, captured the IBF crown with a points win over Axel Schulz and defended it with a knockout of then-unbeaten Frans Botha. No, it ain't Marciano stretching Walcott and Moore, but it's not bad for a guy who had as much business collecting heavyweight title belts as Vin Diesel would have collecting Academy Awards.

Moorer couldn't hold his liquor ("One beer" he once answered when asked how much alcohol it would take to set him off), he got involved in street altercations, had other run-ins with the police, had difficulty absorbing a heavyweight's punch, and relied on a blown-up, bulky body to compete against muscular, natural heavyweights. If ever there was a guy who shouldn't have gone as far as he did, it was Moorer.

He deserves much criticism, but he did win the linear title from a champion THE RING once rated the third-best big man of all-time, he became the first southpaw heavyweight king ever, and he grabbed another alphabet strap before his downfall began. Moorer probably doesn't make it to Canastota (not enough successful heavyweight defenses, and no light heavyweight title except for the WBO crown), but that's okay. There are other measures of success. Like Moorer's name still carrying enough clout to land him in a major HBO bout almost a dozen years after he first started jamming veal sandwiches down his throat and talking (most people thought foolishly) about conquering a division some 40 pounds to the north.

Michael Moorer never did see what a jaw looked like shifted and a mouth looked like hanging open. But he saw what it looked like when the fault lines of history shifted ever so briefly. And that's why, despite those 30 seconds in Atlantic City in August, he doesn't ever have to show us what his head looks like hanging down. ■

DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

EXCLUSIVE REPORT: TYSON TO FIGHT ON PLANET NEPTUNE

Did Roy Jones seriously contemplate a defense of his light heavyweight title where the and the terrorists play? Not likely.

But wire services and plenty of their client newspapers circulated a story that Jones take on cruiserweight Vassily Jirov in Dubai, a city in the United Arab Emirates. They quoted a that said the deal was "85 percent" certain.

It's hard to say which was a more ridiculous assertion—that Jones would compete in faraway or that he would take on Jirov, a possibly dangerous opponent.

"It will be a Las Vegas-style show," said a man named Steve Morgan. He was described as a promoter in the Persian Gulf. This is equivalent to being a rubber plantation operator in the Circle. Doesn't exist.

But news services gave this goofy claim the same credence as a report from the Census Agence France Presse apparently sent out the first story. Given this stamp of legitimacy, it was up and retransmitted by the Associated Press and the BBC, organizations that really ought to kno ter.

There's been a rash of this lately. Wackos out on the fringes find correspondents with weak or addled minds them a preposterous story about an upcoming fight that exist. Then the other wire services repeat it. Next thing you we're all reading about it.

Given the wonders of modern communication, it's much to circulate a story than to check it out, which involves talk actual people.

The best-fabricated tale came out of utterly implausible which, according to the story, was to host Mike Tyson vs. Lennox Lewis. That was before the orphaned fight found a ho Memphis. Beirut is controlled by toadies of Syria, which is h the State Department list of terrorist states. How would you be security chief for that one? The announcers and cornets would be wearing sidearms.

ENEMIES TOGETHER: As I write this, Tyson and King, while suing each other for kazillions, are contemp some sort of limited truce so they can ring cash registers to again. But Shelly Finkel, Tyson's advisor, said that no matter Tyson will not drop his $100-million lawsuit. He contends stole millions from him in a number of creative ways.

King and Tyson both have shopworn goods to sell. Tyso lesser attraction after being exposed so thoroughly by Lewis King promotes clinch-monger John Ruiz, the most boring weight since Henry Akinwande.

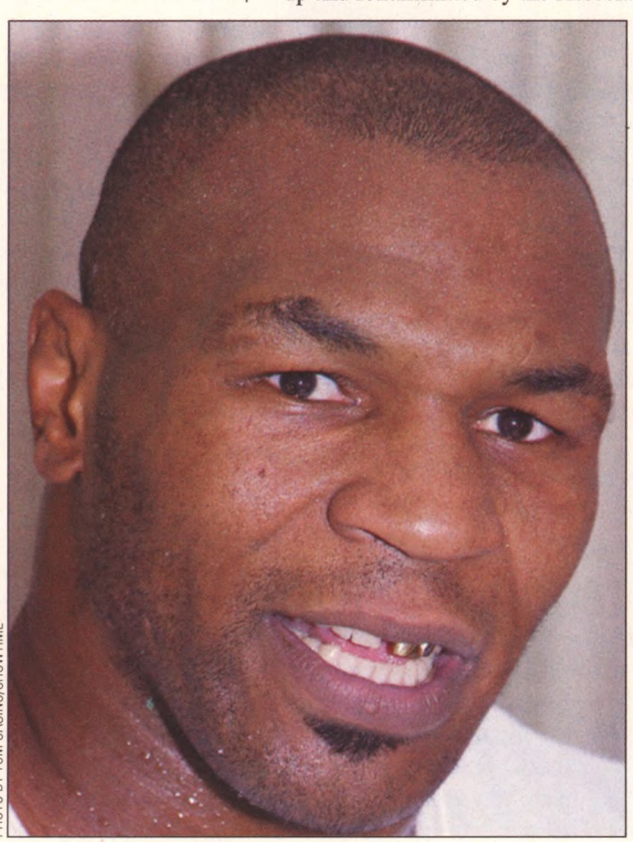


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Where did you say I'm fighting?

Ruiz makes sleep-master Chris Byrd, another less than attractive King attraction, look like a bundle of excitement. So "The Quiet Man" can't be an easy sell to networks and casinos. But his disqualification victory over Kirk Johnson left Ruiz still holding the diminished WBA title. That gave King a few more rounds of bargaining ammunition.

King said something remarkable when he was trying to entice Tyson back for another series of deals: "Nobody generates money like I do," King bragged. "I got Tyson $25-million to fight that guy—what's his name? Peter McNeeley, and you could beat him."

If I heard King right, and he was quoted by the dependable Kevin Iole of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal,* King was bragging about presenting the world a sham of a fight in 1995. As you recall, McNeeley's corner surrendered for him in less time than it takes to cook a runny egg over a high flame.

During that same conversation, King admitted what everyone knew but none of the principals would state for the record—that Tyson paid Lennox Lewis $4-million in step-aside money so Tyson could instead take on the less formidable Bruce Seldon in 1996 and still keep his belt.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Now Hopkins is giving King a headache

IRELAND vs. VEGAS: Featherweight Wayne McCullough, after winning his long battle with British physicians to regain his British boxing license, headed home to Belfast to keep two fight dates in the British isles that were quickly arranged for him by promoter Frank Warren. The British press reported McCullough and his manager-wife Cheryl were planning to sell their Las Vegas home and move to Belfast permanently.

Not so, McCullough told me. Yes, they were selling their home, but planned to buy another one in Las Vegas right away. Though "The Pocket Rocket" spoke fondly of his native city, McCullough said he would stay there only a couple of months, at least for now.

"I'll be coming back here," he said, speaking to me from Las Vegas. McCullough was one of several fighters and individuals that were still owed money by America Presents when it fell apart. But McCullough has no hard feelings.

"I got most of my money," he said. "Mat Tinley still owes me 3½ thousand, but he paid me most of the money after we went before the Nevada commission. I still talk to Mat. That's one good thing. I still love the man. Let's just say there were other people involved."

TUAMAN ROCKS: When David Tua looks sharp, as he did when he annihilated Michael Moorer, the heavyweight division gets a lot more interesting. If Tyson really wants to make some money, he should take on Tua. It's one of the most attractive fights out there.

AMBUSH INTERVIEW: Elmo Adolph went through hell over his officiating of Clifford Etienne vs. Francois Botha. But I thought he performed admirably.

He didn't hear the 10-second warning or the bell ending round eight. But he wasn't alone.

So it would have been idiotic for him to penalize Etienne for hitting Botha after the bell when Adolph couldn't hear it himself. His only regret, Adolph said, is being "so calm and collected" with Showtime interviewer Jim Gray, who conducted what Adolph called an "ambush interview" after the fight.

No doubt there are plenty of other targets that regret letting Showtime's attack dog get his teeth around an ankle.

"I could really have let him have it for his ignorance of the rules," Adolph added.

QUESTIONABLE TRADE: At first it looked like King scored another victory when he lured 2001's Fighter of the Year Bernard Hopkins into his stable. But suddenly Hopkins, one of the fight game's great talkers, seemed no longer able to agree to anything or communicate what on earth he wanted.

It was very much in King's interest to put Hopkins in a rematch with Felix Trinidad. He had deals with both fighters and would have taken money from two directions in a huge event—every promoter's dream. But the dream deal crumbled when "Tito" couldn't get a rematch with his new stablemate Hopkins. That triggered Trinidad's retirement. Boxing writers leaped into print speculating that Trinidad's announcement was a ploy. I never believed that. Trinidad's father meant it. That means Tito meant it.

So when the dust cleared, King lost a 29-year-old Trinidad who'd always been willing to fight anybody, and gained a 37-year-old Hopkins at the top of the high-maintenance list. It was like trading in a late-model Mercedes for a '66 with a transmission that makes a funny noise.

MAGOO: This one goes to a friend, California referee Pat Russell. When James Toney knocked down Jason Robinson with a big right hand in the last seconds of the fifth round in Temecula, California, Toney added to his work by hitting Robinson with two more right hands when he was down. I thought it was flagrant enough to merit disqualification. But Russell took no points. I didn't even hear a warning.

And shame on the FOX SportsNet announcing team for not calling attention to this dangerous foul. Fighters watch TV fights. When no one makes a big deal about hitting a man when he's down, they get the message it's not a big deal, and the disease spreads. ■

BEING THERE

WILD CARD BOXING CLUB

IF YOU GO

Location: 1123 Vine Street, 2nd Floor, Hollywood, CA 90038; phone: 323-461-4170.

Directions: If headed north on the Hollywood Freeway (Route 101), exit at Santa Monica Boulevard, make a left, go approximately one mile, and turn right on Vine. If headed south, exit at Vine Street, make a right, go approximately 1½ miles, and the gym will be on your right.

Hours of operation: 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday to Friday; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Licensed pros pay $25 per month. Others pay $50 per month or $5 per day. Daily or monthly fees for personal trainers are reasonable and negotiable.

Who to look out for: Among the contenders and champions who train there are Manny Pacquiao, Gerry Penalosa, James Toney, Michael Moorer, Willie Jorrin, Juan Lazcano, Ben Tackie, Brian Viloria, Johnny Bredahl, Lamon Brewster, and Lucia Rijker. Others include television executive Sam Simon (co-creator of *The Simpsons*), actors Wesley Snipes and Cuba Gooding Jr., and celebrity lawyer Robert Shapiro. The trainers include Roach's brother Pepper, colorful raconteur and former journeyman light heavyweight Macka Foley, onetime heavyweight prospect Justin Fortune, former Russian amateur star Boris Zykanov, Eric Brown, Sammy Stewart, and Troy "Bodacious Bo" Bodine.

Advice to greenhorns: Don't gawk! While the gym is extremely friendly and non-threatening, all of the members—which include housewives, entertainers, models, blue-collar warriors, baby boomers trying to shed pounds, and pros of all levels—are there to work, not pose.

There's plenty to look at while you're jumping rope

Text by Robert Mladinich
Photos by Jan Sanders

Although it is located just a few blocks off of the fabled Hollywood Boulevard in a city known more than anything else for illusion, fantasy, and overindulgence, the Wild Card Boxing Club is known more than anything else for its glorious non-glitz. Its owner, former junior featherweight contender and current top-flight trainer Freddie Roach, wouldn't have it any other way. Having been mentored as a fighter and trainer by the legendary Eddie Futch, the 42-year-old Roach is about as old school as one can get in today's world.

"A lot of Eddie rubbed off on me, especially the way he treated everyone with respect," said Roach. "Everybody grows up wanting to be an actor or an actress. But all the successful ones that I meet want to be athletes, especially boxers. That's why no one gets any special treatment here. They come here to learn, not to be pampered."

Housed on the second floor of a strip mall, the gym is equipped with one ring, numerous bags, and ample exe space. The nearly 100 members inc about 35 amateur and professional fig of varied skill levels, many yet to be covered performers, and dozens of nary folks drawn to the novelty of a bo workout in a totally unpretentious env ment. Most prefer the interactive mitt offered by the in-house trainers t monotony of hitting the bags.

"Everybody here is so positive, they really make you feel like you're something," said Diane Dominic, who 10 pounds in six weeks at the gym giving birth to her second child. "If y to other more expensive gyms, y nothing but a number. Here, the tra take their time. They genuinely seem interested in showing people how t dedicated than they are in making m And where else can people like me alongside Michael Moorer and Ja Toney without feeling uncomfortable?

Like most gyms, the walls are tooned with boxing photos, posters articles spanning several decades. The also no shortage of positive messag those walls, such as "Only The St Survive," "It Ain't Easy," and "To Pe Like A Champion, You Must Train

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

IBF 122-pound king Manny Pacquiao is among the many elite fighters who call the Wild Card home

Undefeated heavyweight prospect Ste Vukosa with the Wild Card proprieto

Trainers and members get down to business in the spacious Wild Card ring

Owner Roach doesn't have to go far to wash his sweaty clothes

One." While such sayings are standard fare in sweat factories, they seem to have more than superficial meaning at the Wild Card.

"The tone for this gym is set by Freddie, not by some over-the-top celebrity," said Peter Finestone, a video editor. "It doesn't matter if you're an actor or a repo man. If an attitude develops, he squashes it right away. That's why this is such a great training venue. Hollywood tends to be full of s___, but this is the antithesis of Hollywood and all that it represents." ■

Roach's brother Pepper applies the handwraps

Trainer Macka Foley holds the pads for a student

CAMERA CLICKS

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Of all the unique venues used for boxing over the years, this has to be one of the coolest. When super middleweight Jeff Lacy kayoed Jason Collins on the undercard of the Joe Calzaghe-Miguel Jimenez fight in Wales, he did it with Cardiff Castle in the background. Collins, confused by the surroundings, made the mistake of kneeling down for the local royalty in round one, and got counted out.

We may not be soccer experts here at THE RING, isn't there some rule about not using your ha Junior lightweight Acelino Freitas, who unfortun is using his hands less and less and his feet and more in the ring, celebrated his native Bra World Cup victory by firing an uppercut at a so ball at a recent press conference.

PHOTO BY RICK GUZMAN

A Bodak moment: Cutman Chuck Bodak and undefeated female fighter Laila Ali created a great photo opportunity recently when "She Bee Stingin'" stung the veteran clotter with a right hand. She opened a cut on Bodak's chin, but he was well-prepared to stop the flow of blood.

How ironic that heavyweight Kirk Johnson should be sitting in front o particular sign after doing his part to create boxing at its worst against Ruiz. Johnson, who came in as a prefight favorite but struggled throu the match and ended up a disqualification loser, has a lot of rebuildi do after hitting new lows against "The Quiet Man."

Not only is she sexy, but she also has great taste in magazines! Round-card girl Tara Hamilton shows that she knows more than one way to grab a boxing fan's attention by posing with a recent issue of THE RING EXTRA.

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Punch mitts are falling from the sky in Germany! Dariusz Michalczewski and trainer Fritz Sdunek show off some of the unusual training methods that have kept the light heavyweight undefeated for so many years. After this, they played patty-cake to hone Michalczewski's hand-eye coordination, and duck-duck-goose to improve his footwork.

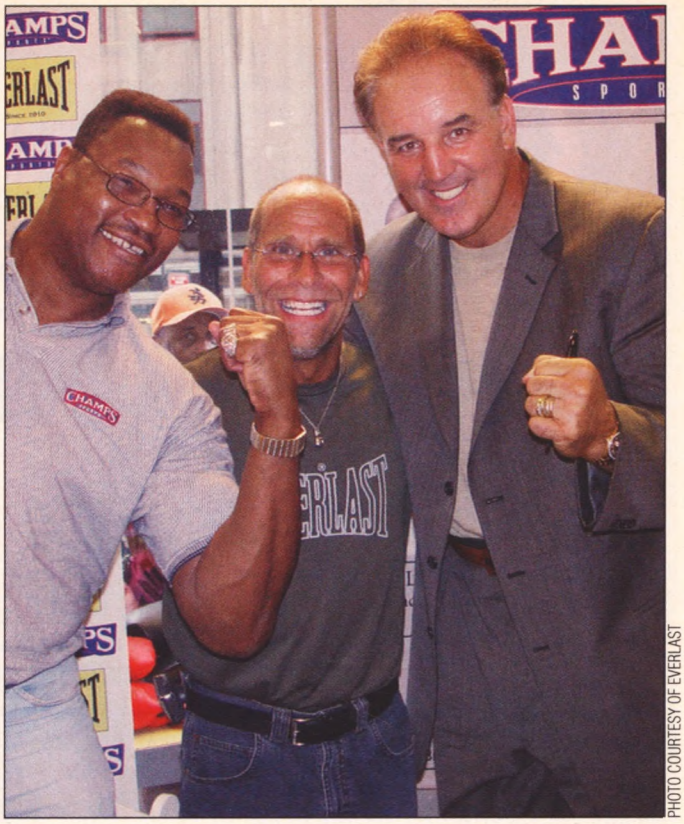


PHOTO COURTESY OF EVERLAST

Twenty years after their historic heavyweight championship fight, Larry Holmes and Gerry Cooney reunited and posed with Everlast CEO George Horowitz. Sorry, George, but if anyone in this photo should be running a company called Everlast, it's the legendary Holmes, who's still going strong at age 52 and may never go away.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

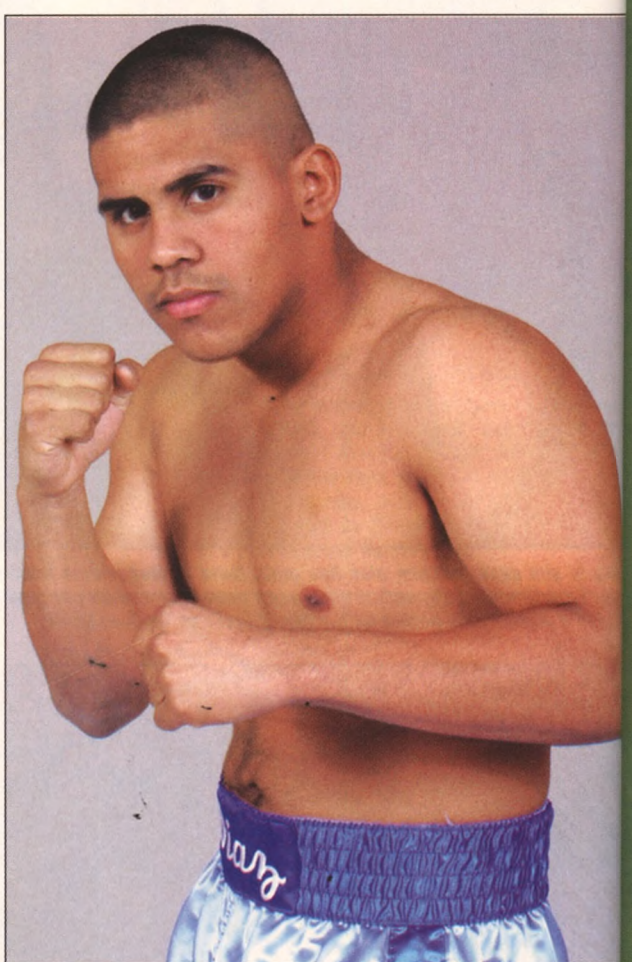
Comedian Redd Foxx displays his dedication to light heavy champ Archie Moore by shaving an "M" into his hair, and how does Moore show his appreciation? By giving Foxx bunny ears. Regardless, Foxx's good-luck wishes worked, as Moore knocked out Yvon Durelle in three rounds later that night in the 1959 rematch to their classic from the previous year.

NEW FACES

JUAN DIAZ

Lightweight

By Joe Santoliquito



PRO RECORD

2000		
June 23	Rafael Ortiz, Merida, Mexico	KO 1
July 22	Miller Vazquez, Mexico City	KO 1
Sept. 2	Carlos Alvarez, Mexicali, Mexico	KO 1
Sept. 22	Starr Johnson, Houston, TX	KO 3
Nov. 10	Antonio Young, Las Vegas	KO 2
Dec. 1	Michael Lucero, Las Vegas	W 6
2001		
Jan. 13	Brad Jensen, Uncasville, CT	W 6
March 2	Mahan Washington, Las Vegas	W 6
May 19	Carlos Nevarez, Uncasville	KO 1
June 23	John Trigg, Uncasville	W 6
July 27	Scott Buck, Mt. Pleasant, MI	KO 1
Sept. 1	Ubaldo Hernandez, El Paso, TX	W 8
Nov. 10	Rudy Lunsford, Houston	W 4
2002		
Feb. 15	Juan Carlos Juarez, Houston	W 8
April 27	Nelson Medina, Uncasville	W 8
July 5	Mike Davis, Laredo, TX	W 10
Aug. 24	Peter Nieves, Atlantic City	W 10

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
17	17	0	0	7

Tears were still streaming down Juan Diaz' face when he returned to his locker room. His ego was bruised, his ribs were sore, and he was in no mood to hear anything from anyone after barely squeaking past Ubaldo Hernandez by eight-round split decision. Some at ringside thought the young Mexican-American deserved to lose on that September 1, 2001 night in El Paso, Texas.

So did Diaz.

He felt he had let down everyone who ever supported him, and the emotion overflowed when he was interviewed after the fight. The Showtime broadcast team ripped into his teary reaction. The El Paso crowd booed. And Diaz kept sulking as he made his way through the ropes, down the aisle, and finally to the seclusion of his dressing room and his most trusted friends.

But Willie Savannah wasn't having any of it. Savannah, Diaz' manager who has known the kid since he was eight, told Diaz that he'd handle what ailed him; he'd stop that crying.

"If you want me to, I'll go out and tell everyone that you've announced your retirement. Is that okay, Juan?" Savannah asked, half-jokingly. "I'll tell everyone you're through with boxing, that it's over, you're retiring."

Sniffling underneath his robe and tow
Diaz looked up and a smile quickly cre
his face.

"I told him not to ask me that again," D
recalled. "I wasn't through. I underst
where Mr. Savannah was coming from. I
serious when I told him not to ask me
again. I thought I lost and I didn't know h
was going to take it. But I didn't forget
moment. What keeps me fighting is all a

(Continued on page

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July 1984: Bazooka's Aim Is True: Gomez Shoots Down LaPorte In The Battle For San Juan. Plus: Michael Spinks, Vinny Pazienza, Tyrone Crawley, Leonard's comeback, Chandler-Sandoval, Hagler-Roldan.

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Dec. 1984: Hagler Hammers Hamsho. Plus: Barry McGuigan, James Broad, Pinklon Thomas, Julian Jackson.

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Feb. 1985: Showdown: Page Clobbers Coetzee For WBA Title. Plus: Larry Holmes, lightweights, Cooney-Chaplin, McCallum-Minchillo.

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"THE GOLDEN BOY" PROVES HIS MANHOOD

Is Oscar's Prime Just Beginning?

PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

De La Hoya cracks Vargas with a vicious right hand in the late stages of their junior middleweight war. An eighth-round onslaught of rights set Vargas up for the left hooks in the 10th and 11th rounds that would finish the fight.

By Eric Raskin

In the months leading up to "Bad Blood," Fernando Vargas repeatedly posed two questions about Oscar De La Hoya: Is "The Golden Boy" a *real* 154-pounder, one who can deal with a strong, career-long junior middleweight like himself? And is De La Hoya a *real* Mexican, one who can do the nation's warrior heritage proud when confronted with an opponent who would rather be dead than be un-Mexican?

Whether or not he's a great fighter, Vargas is definitely a great interroga and he always gets answers out of opponents. But to paraphrase that overu but nonetheless appropriate Jack Nich son line, Vargas wanted answers, but couldn't handle the truth. That's beca the truth is De La Hoya is as real and strong at 154 as he was in every other weight division he's ruled, and, more important, he's every bit as "Mexican" in the ring as Vargas.

Hell, against Vargas, he was as macho and as Mexican as any great fighter ever was. He didn't beat Vargas with hand speed and movement, as most of the experts thought he would; he beat him with toughness, endurance, and power. Sure, De La Hoya's exceptional boxing skills were a factor in the fight. But those skills alone were not going to defeat the sharp, determined, magnificently strong Vargas on this night. De La Hoya, sporting a swollen cheekbone from the first round on, dealing with a bloody nose and mouth for the majority of the fight, and absorbing more hard, effective punches than he had in any previous contest, needed to get in touch with his Mexican side to pull this one out.

Some may still be turned off by The Golden Boy's programmed, vanilla interviews, in which he comes off somewhere between a bad actor and a good politician, or even by things for which he can't fairly be criticized, such as his good looks or his ridiculous wealth. But to denigrate him as a fighter, to call him "Chicken" De La Hoya or to suggest that he's a promotional fabrication or a blown-up lightweight, is now more indefensible than ever.

"I'm not a lightweight," said De La Hoya, now THE RING's junior middleweight champion of the world, when asked what his parting message for 11th-round kayo victim Vargas was. "I'm not a 130-pound puncher anymore. People have to respect that."

Prior to the night of September 14, 2002, if you were asked to identify the prime Oscar De La Hoya, you probably would have said it was the lightweight version, the one who blew out Rafael Ruelas, Genaro Hernandez, and Jesse James Leija in succession. Perhaps you could argue that De La Hoya's peak extended to his brief stay at 140 pounds as well.

But since his move up to welterweight in April '97, the thinking has been that Oscar's power didn't follow him, and thus we were seeing a great champion whose greatest work was behind him. In his four fights against first-class opposition at 147 pounds, he fought virtually even-up with Pernell Whitaker, Ike Quartey, and Felix Trinidad, and then lost closely but clearly to Shane Mosley. In 48 rounds with those men, he never showed absolute superiority, and, except for the 12th round against Quartey, never had a knockout in his grasp. It was therefore assumed that, at 154 pounds, De La Hoya was not going to suddenly produce awesome kayo power or the best work of his career.

In fact, the way he had spoken of the-

Vargas goes eye-to-leather with a De La Hoya jab. Oscar's lead left was a crucial weapon all night, allowing him to control the action when he kept the fight at center ring.

future over the last several years, De La Hoya, who will turn 30 next February, was supposed to be just about retired by now. Apparently, the plan has been modified. Based on his performance against Vargas, *this* may be De La Hoya's prime beginning now, and with several superfights to be fought, boxing's number- draw below heavyweight isn't re to trade in something he's so magn cent at for a life as a run-of-the- singer or a less-than-run-of-the- actor.

"I won't retire until I know I secure my legacy in boxing," said La Hoya. "That's fighting Sha Mosley, that's fighting Trinidad if comes back—if he comes back, if doesn't I respect that—fighting best. In order to become a great, g champion, I have to beat the gu who beat me."

Incredibly, by 2 a.m. in Las Ve the morning after the fight, word spreading amongst the media me bers still hanging out at Manda Bay that promoters Bob Arum Don King had already hammered a deal for De La Hoya to fi Trinidad again. Of course there's minor hitch: "Tito" is retired. King will doubt do his duffel-bag-toting best change the Puerto Rican superstar's mi

THE SUPERFIGHT OF THE YEAR

The three biggest fights of 2002—De La Hoya-Vargas, Barrera-Morales II, and Lewis-Tyson—had a lot in common. They were all preceded by press conference melees, they all featured plenty of trash talk, and they were all postponed several months from their original dates. But in the ring, De La Hoya-Vargas distinguished itself from the others because it was, quite simply, a great fight, one that delivered on its $50 pay-per-view price tag.

Before a sellout crowd of 11,425 at Mandalay Bay Events Center, De La Hoya, 154, East Los Angeles, California, and Vargas, 154, Oxnard, California, got the drama started in the very first round, when Vargas knocked "The Golden Boy" off-balance and nearly through the ropes with about 30 seconds to go. Although De La Hoya slipped most of Vargas' follow-up shots, a few hard left hooks got through, including one that instantly raised a welt on De La Hoya's right cheekbone and made his eyes bug out momentarily in recognition of the power his op nent possessed.

The 12-5 betting favorite bounced back in round two, jabbi and working Vargas' body to some effect. But the 24-year- Vargas took the third, posting a 22-3 edge in powershots lan

Oscar and Fernando exchange blows

but as of press time, Trinidad was showing no signs of budging. Despite the deal he cut with King hours later, Arum seemed realistic about that at the postfight press conference.

"I am not going to put any pressure on Felix Trinidad to come back," Arum said. "That would be wrong. If he wants to be retired, he's got every reason. He was a great, great warrior in the ring, and he deserves to be retired. So this is a decision which will be made by Felix Trinidad, and Felix Trinidad alone."

That leaves Mosley as the next superfight opponent for De La Hoya. It's a fascinating fight because, after becoming the only man to decisively beat De La Hoya, back in June '00, Mosley went on to lose twice to Vernon Forrest at welterweight. He's now moving up to junior middle, and he'll take at least one tuneup before facing Oscar, but Mosley easing back into the win column won't change the fact that momentum and size are on De La Hoya's side. Still, Sugar Shane had the style to beat De La Hoya once, so who knows? It's another huge pay-per-view payday for both, that's for sure.

Not surprisingly, Vargas was gutsy in defeat, and his body assault definitely affected De La Hoya in spots. De La Hoya also used a potent body attack, however, and Vargas lost steam late in the fight as a result.

There are several other outstanding rivals out there for De La Hoya, but they'll all have to play the waiting game for now. Forrest, the world welterweight champion, is very dangerous, but has neither a pleasing style nor a mainstream name. Winky Wright, the real

according to CompuBox. The trading of rounds continued in the fourth, with De La Hoya, 29, dictating with his jab and landing a sizzling left uppercut toward the end of the stanza. It was Vargas' turn in the fifth, though, and by round's end, De La Hoya's nose and mouth were both trickling blood. It was looking like Vargas' size, strength, and bodywork were wearing on him.

But the fight began to take a lasting turn in the sixth when a short left hook sliced open Vargas' right cheek. Though "El Feroz" did the better overall work in the round (including landing two flush left hooks just before the bell), the blood persuaded two of the judges to score the round for De La Hoya, and the first real signs of Vargas' fatigue were beginning to show. The "Bad Blood" also flowed when De La Hoya landed a right hand just after the bell, and Vargas, not surprisingly, blew off his attempted apology.

With his hands dangerously low, De La Hoya outjabbed and outboxed Vargas to take the seventh. And in the eighth, with Vargas tiring, the game plan of De La Hoya and trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr. became apparent. Oscar began firing his improved right hand, and Vargas, who had barely seen the straight right all night, wasn't ready for it. One after another landed, as De La Hoya completely dominated the round.

Yet it was Vargas who dominated the ninth, throwing twice as many punches as he had in the eighth (76 to 38) and bulling De La Hoya around with a determined body attack. However, throwing that many punches when you're already exhausted can lead to disaster, and it did for Vargas in the 10th. De La Hoya, like a rocket detonating in stages, went from focusing on the jab, and then the right hand, to zeroing in with the left hook, and Vargas, probably looking out for the straight right, never saw it coming. Luckily for El Feroz, there were only three seconds left in the round when De La Hoya's hook made him wobble dramatically, but the fight was as good as over.

De La Hoya, 35-2 (27), took his time in the 11th, and when he saw his opening, launched the counter hook again, connecting with the hinge of Vargas' jaw and sending him down hard. The young gladiator bravely got up, but De La Hoya pummeled him across the ring, unloading a flurry of 15 punches in the corner that left Vargas, 22-2 (20), defenseless and forced a perfect stoppage by referee Joe Cortez at the 1:48 mark. Through 10 rounds, judges Paul Smith and Doug Tucker had De La Hoya up 96-94, while Patricia Jarman-Manning saw Vargas ahead 97-94. THE RING had it even at 95-95.

"I told Oscar a beautiful body does not win fights," said the gloating Mayweather in reference to the awesome physique that Vargas so proudly brought into the contest. "Oscar put a good beating on him. But he can fight even better."

Vargas was taken to Valley Hospital immediately after the fight, and was released a few hours later with a broken right eye socket. Co-manager Rolando Arellano spoke at the press conference on his behalf.

"We must consider Oscar De La Hoya one of the greatest champions out there," Arellano said. "I've got a message for Oscar: Congratulations."

Television: HBO Pay-Per-View
Promoters: Top Rank, Main Events
(9-14-02)

—ER

De La Hoya knew when to get aggressive, and when he had Vargas ready to go in the 11th, he pounced on him along the ropes. Oscar afterward that the win was possibly the most satisfying of his career.

number-one contender at junior middle *(see sidebar on this page)*, has even less marquee value than Forrest. Bernard Hopkins, the world middleweight champion, could create a blockbuster someday, but De La Hoya, who always fights on his own terms, knows that fight is better for him in a year or two, when he's ready to be a 160-pounder. And a Vargas rematch could be a possibility—"Ferocious Fernando" certainly showed he can give De La Hoya hell, and their fight was the second-largest-grossing non-heavyweight pay-per-view ever—but Vargas, whom some speculate could be ruined after this latest brutal loss, will have to show he can rebuild first

Whatever the order, several of t compelling fights will happen. His years at welterweight didn't quite pan o the golden era for The Golden Boy, b appears likely that whatever time he left, to be spent at 154 and probably pounds, will unfold as the most importa

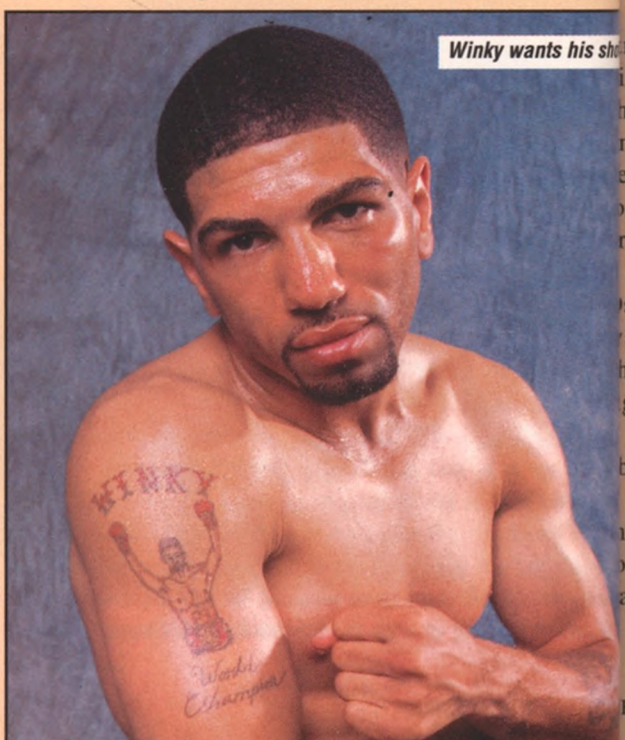
THE WRONG RESULT FOR WRIGHT

Winky Wright made no secret of the fact that he was rooting for Fernando Vargas to beat Oscar De La Hoya. The reason was simple: If Vargas won, Wright had a verbal promise of a shot at the world junior middleweight title and, probably, a million-dollar payday; if De La Hoya won, Wright figured he would get neither.

We all know how the fight turned out, and so Wright, THE RING's number-one rated contender to world champion De La Hoya, may have to settle for being just a contender, not a challenger. Still, Wright, who sat ringside for De La Hoya-Vargas seven days after beating Bronco McKart for the third time, was definitely encouraged that De La Hoya dropped his name—without even being prompted—while HBO's Larry Merchant interviewed him after the fight.

"Winky Wright is saying I don't want to fight him, this and that," said De La Hoya. "But if it presents itself—because you know I never ducked anybody—hey, why not fight him?"

THE RING's championship policy states that we will not



Winky wants his sh

A sensational left hook sent Vargas to the canvas in round 11. Those who said De La Hoya didn't take his punching power with him to 154 pounds were proven wrong when he iced the naturally larger Vargas.

his legacy. The Vargas fight alone surely did wonders for De La Hoya's already enormous fan base, as he emerged more than ever as a Mexican-American of whom both Mexicans and Americans can be proud.

Vargas, of course, wasn't the only guy ever to question De La Hoya's Mexicanhood; he was just the most vocal about it. You could see where that talk was coming from, to an extent. De La Hoya's image had become a million times more Hollywood than East L.A., thanks to all the singing, golfing, and smiling for the flash bulbs. And the guy did run away down the stretch against Trinidad, doing the most un-Mexican thing you can do in the ring except for quit. The last straw for some was the fact that De La Hoya married a Puerto Rican pop star, Millie Corretjer, and moved to her homeland.

But ironically, De La Hoya, speaking in Spanish, dedicated the victory to the Mexican people and to his wife, two sides of his support system that someone like Vargas might think could never go together.

"My wife motivated me. She was there with me for a month-and-a-half in camp," revealed De La Hoya. "She tells me, 'You better train hard, or don't come back.' I say, 'All right, I'll train hard.'"

So now we know De La Hoya is whipped like any ordinary man. But there was nothing ordinary about the way he whipped Vargas and proved that, even by boxing's exceptionally high standards, he is *all* man. ■

strip a fighter unless he retires or moves to another weight division, so there is no way of enforcing any "mandatory" challenge by Wright. The plan, therefore, was to put pressure on De La Hoya, who is certainly entitled to an optional defense or two first, to face Wright before too long. If we are to believe what Oscar said, however, it might not take as much pressure as we originally expected.

"Hey, I'm a fan just like everybody else. I want to see Oscar vs. Trinidad or Mosley," conceded Wright. "But I also want to see him give someone he hasn't already fought a chance. I don't have to be next. I can take a couple of other fights first. But I deserve my chance."

De La Hoya's promoter, Bob Arum, has his reservations about making the fight.

"Winky Wright has to get better known," said Arum. "I'm the guy putting out the money, and I'm an old man who's not looking to lose millions of dollars, so I just don't see that fight happening at this time."

If the fight doesn't happen, Wright's biggest potential payday is probably Vargas. Wright lost a disputed majority decision to Vargas in December '99, and Vargas' willingness to give him a rematch was always overruled by his opportunities for other more lucrative fights. Until now.

"Before, I needed Vargas. Now he needs me," said slick southpaw Wright, who holds the IBF belt once possessed by Vargas. "This is the way it always works with me. I wanted the winner [of De La Hoya-Vargas], so why do I have to fight the loser instead? I'd definitely fight Vargas again if that's my best option. But I don't want scraps. I want the whole meal.

"I just gotta keep fighting on TV, and eventually the public will demand that Oscar fights me. But hey, if it never happens, I'm making okay money, and I can retire one day knowing everybody ducked me, I didn't duck them."

Look at De La Hoya's resume. He's no chicken, and he doesn't duck. Here's hoping he'll continue along that path. Oscar, do the Wright thing.

—ER

PAULIE AYALA VS. ERIK MORALES

NO GRUDGE MATCH... JUST A GREAT MATCH

By Ivan Goldman

It's no secret why Paulie Ayala is taking on the bigger Erik Morales up in Morales' featherweight territory.

"It's time to cash in," said the utterly honest Ayala, who turned 32 in April. So junior feather Ayala's first fight at 126 pounds will be against one of the two best featherweights out there (the other being Marco Antonio Barrera).

At first glance, it doesn't seem like Ayala would have much of a shot. But look a little closer and you find plenty of knowledgeable people in the fight community who think southpaw Ayala has an excellent chance to pull this one out.

"I see this as being a pretty damn close fight," said Rich Marotta, FOX SportsNet's boxing analyst. "It's also a very good fight. And I think Ayala may actually score an upset in this.

"On the face of it, it doesn't seem he'd be strong enough. But I can see him throwing so many punches and being such a clever boxer that he's going to do it, even though I don't think he can hurt Morales."

Marotta noted something else about this matchup that has less to do with skill than it does with what's inside the boxers' heads. Morales will be only 26 when the fight goes off on November 16. But he's been fighting more than 20 years, and he seems to experience more trouble these days getting motivated.

"I don't think Morales will have the passion against Ayala as he did against Marco Antonio Barrera in their two fights," Marotta said. "I don't think he'll rise to that. I have gained such respect for Ayala and his craftsmanship in the ring and his cleverness. I think he might take this by close decision."

Three thousand miles from California-based Marotta, Cedric Kushner's matchmaker, Eric Bottjer, voiced a similar opinion.

"Morales seems to have motivational problems," Bottjer said. "The guy who's going to have trouble with the weight is Morales. I know he's had trouble before. And I'm told that the motivational problems lead to problems in the gym.

"With Morales, a lot of it depends on how much Ayala means to him. And Ayala is the nicest guy in the world. So he won't offend Morales. There won't be that element that was obviously there for Barrera."

Bottjer recalled Morales' 12-round unanimous decision victory over Wayne McCullough in October 1999.

"McCullough is a guy who throws a billion punches, and he can't punch hard," said Bottjer. "Morales almost quit during the fight because of the volume of punches he was contending with. He admitted that. And Ayala is a guy like that, a guy who

PHOTOS BY CHRIS FARINA

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Some experts believe the jump from junior feather to full-fledged featherweight will work against Ayala. But it shouldn't be forgotten that Morales used to fight at 122 pounds, and that Ayala beat Johnny Tapia the second time (pictured) at a catchweight of 124.

throws a lot of punches. He can give Morales problems."

On the other hand, it would be premature to count Morales out of this or any fight. He will be coming forward, as always, and it will be up to the busy Ayala to break that forward momentum. Morales' crisp punches have a way of making his opponents worry so much about what he's doing that they drop their fight plan altogether.

McCullough, who tasted Morales' power, believes "El Terrible" has too much for Ayala.

"I think Morales is going to be too strong for him," McCullough said. "He's just too accurate and sharp with his punches. And this is what? Ayala's first fight at featherweight?

"I like them both as people, but I think in Morales' last fight, against Barrera, he fought a great fight. I thought Morales beat him."

Although the judges gave the decision to Barrera, Morales will actually own the momentum from fighting so well in his previous outing, McCullough believes.

"Morales" he said, "was tall at super bantam. And he's still tall as a featherweight. With that height, and using that long reach the way he does, it's almost impossible to get to him. Paulie comes forward, and that suits Morales. But if Paulie backs off, that suits Morales anyway."

But, McCullough cautioned, "I don't think it will be an easy fight for Morales. It's going to be a barnburner. But I think Morales will come out on top at the end."

Everyone you talk to predicts a terrific fight. That's the way their styles match up. These two don't run, and they rarely clinch. And even when Morales seems to have motivational problems, he always fights aggressively. He makes the fight exciting even when he's having a bad night.

There are more people who believe Barrera got robbed in his first fight against Morales than think Morales was robbed against Barrera in the rematch. But most people would probably agree that a 1-1 split is about right. If the two decisions reversed, it would be a fairer 1-1 split. T the fight business. Even when it gets it it gets it wrong.

Ayala, 34-1 (12), who holds THE R championship belt at junior feather, w taking on THE RING's number-one fe weight contender. Also, the vacant WB will be at stake. Morales lost it when he to defeat Barrera in their rematch. Th could have been Barrera's, but he refu pay a sanctioning fee to that particular bet gang.

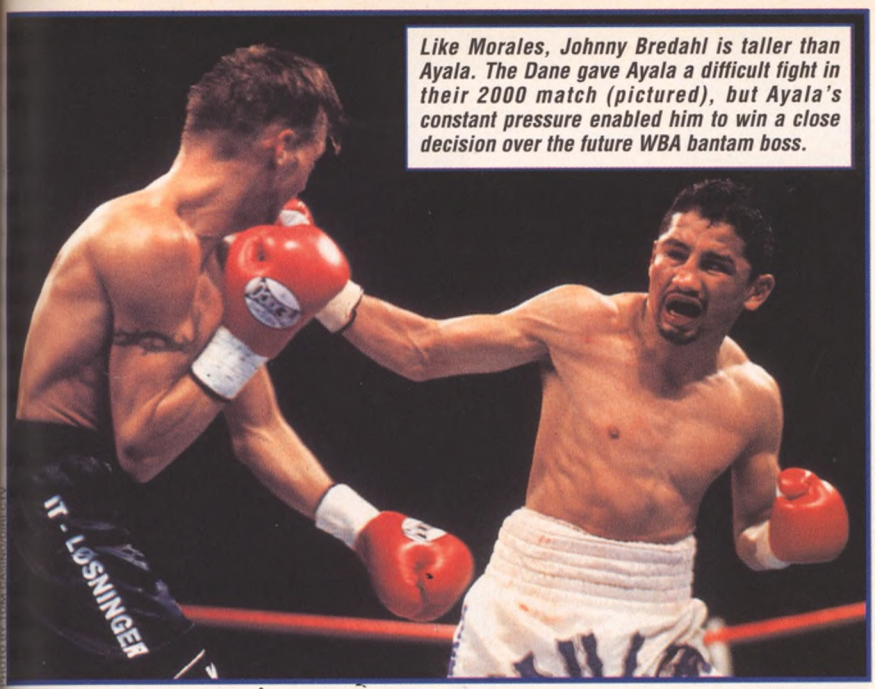
The WBC, tainted though it might b means a lot in Mexico. Its belt is som Morales will want back. That could be vation enough.

Whenever a top Mexican fighte Morales goes up against a popular Me American fighter like Ayala, it adds dra the contest. Barrera, who hails from the metropolis of Mexico City, had Mexican fans on his side when he Morales, from the much smaller Tijuana

But when Morales is up against Ay the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, yo expect most of the Mexican fans that fa Barrera to switch to Morales. In fact, fo sons that aren't altogether clear, ple Mexican-American fans—the staunches in the U.S.—tend to back a Mexican fi against a Mexican-American.

"This will stir up the Latin commu Ayala said from his home in Fort W

Both Morales and Ayala have been involved in bouts that were selected as THE RING's Fi the Year. Ayala-Tapia won that honor in 1999, while the first Morales-Marco Antonio B fight (pictured) was the most sensational fight of 2000.



Like Morales, Johnny Bredahl is taller than Ayala. The Dane gave Ayala a difficult fight in their 2000 match (pictured), but Ayala's constant pressure enabled him to win a close decision over the future WBA bantam boss.

Texas. "I've never been the favorite of a lot of Spanish-speaking Mexicans. I don't speak fluent Spanish. But I'm as Hispanic as can be. And I'll be representing the United States. That includes plenty of Hispanics.

"And," he added, "I will represent even fans from Mexico—the ones who like the way I fight."

There are plenty of people in that category, people who like the way he fights. It's hard not to. Ayala stays in shape, trains hard, fights hard, and fights smart. He's mastered the art of finding the chinks in his opponent's armor. He was THE RING's Fighter of the Year in 1999, and he won the Fight of the Year that same year against Johnny Tapia.

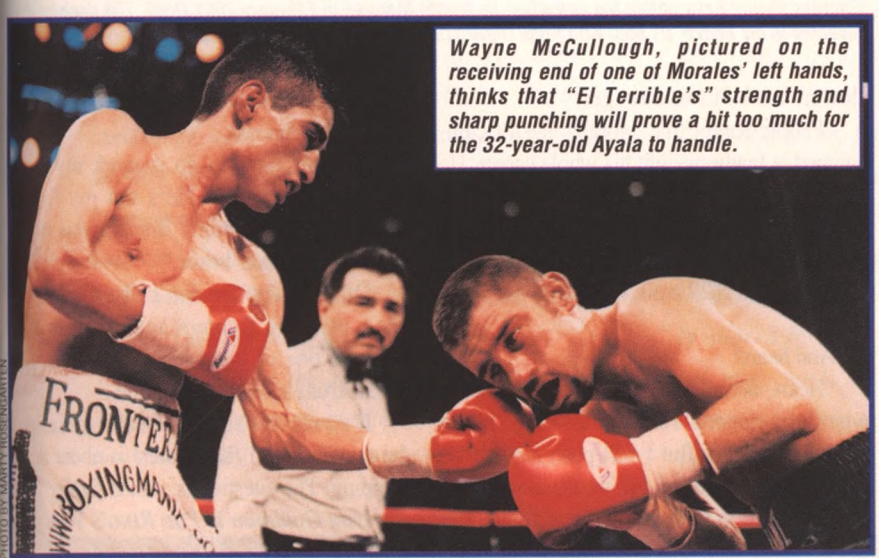
Morales is no stranger to excitement either. He was in the Fight of the Year in 2000 against Barrera. Round five of that fight was Round of the Year.

In boxing, which has the nicest athletes of any sport, Ayala and Morales are nice-guy standouts. They are both incredibly sincere. Ask them a question and they search for the truest answer, not the one that makes them look good. Fans can see this, and it adds to the fighters' popularity.

But there's a yin-yang to this. When the promoter and the network smell plenty of interest, the fight goes to pay-per-view, which is where HBO is putting this one. It won't come free.

"This fight will do really well in Las Vegas," said Royce Feour, sports columnist for the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. "It's going

(Continued on page 40)



Wayne McCullough, pictured on the receiving end of one of Morales' left hands, thinks that "El Terrible's" strength and sharp punching will prove a bit too much for the 32-year-old Ayala to handle.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENBAUM

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Ayala-Morales

(Continued from page 39)

to bring them in. Ayala draws in a lot of Texans, and the Mandalay Bay really likes Paulie. He brings in big players.

"In fact, it was a little surprising to me how much they like him, because he's not flamboyant. But people just like to see him fight, and the Mandalay Bay can see that. Morales also attracts plenty of fans. When Ayala came in to watch a fight at the MGM [Barrera-Morales II], the Mandalay Bay insisted he stay there and not at the MGM. It's an indication of how much they like him. I haven't heard that about fighters a whole lot, short of Sugar Ray Leonard, Mike Tyson, or Oscar De La Hoya. That's the way they're treating Ayala."

The fierce Morales, 41-1 (31), is unlikely to change his style against Ayala. He breaks down his opponents by throwing hard, quick combinations. He has near-perfect balance, tends to move to all the right places, and takes the heart out of foes with his counterpunching. In the rematch with Barrera, Morales was clearly the aggressor, especially in the early rounds.

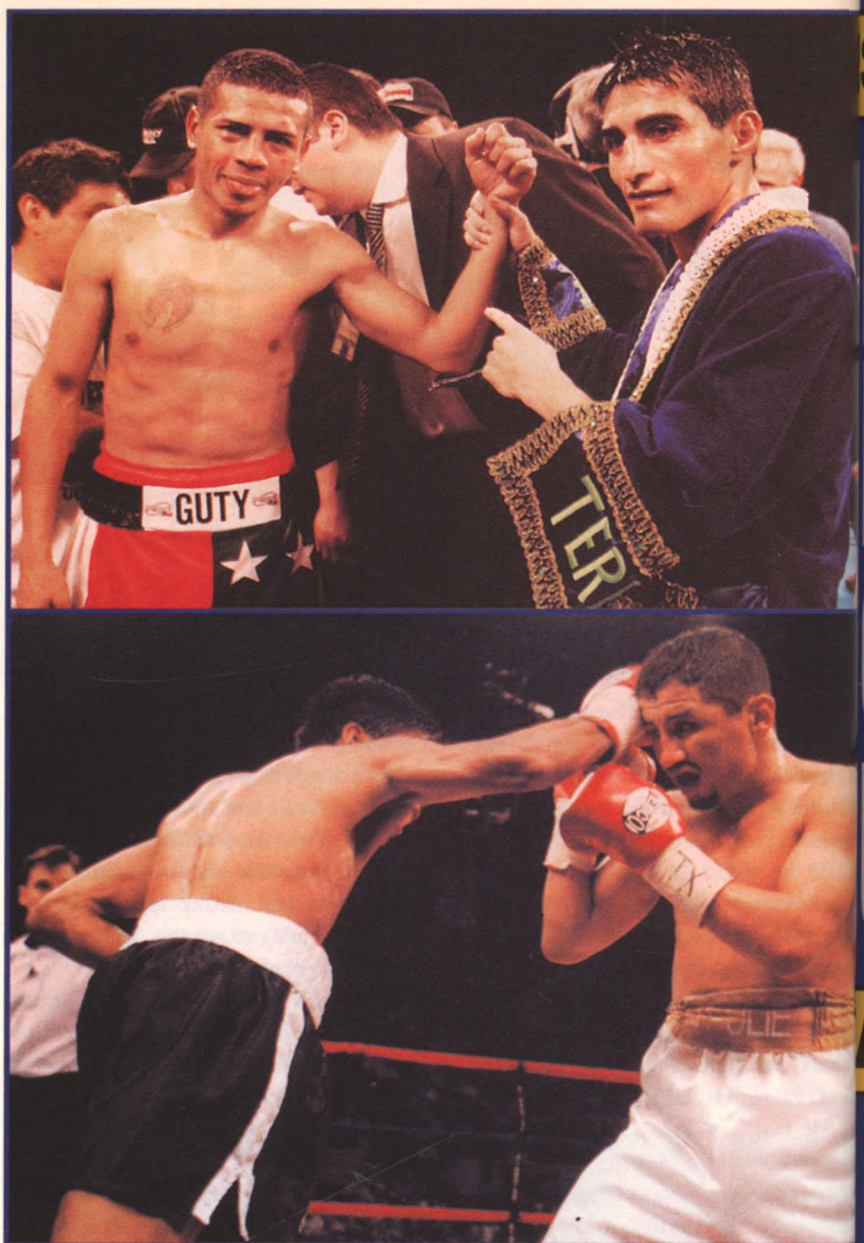
But Morales has had his off-nights. It's widely believed that his February 2001 decision over Guty Espadas in Las Vegas was a gift, as well as his split decision over Barrera in their first match. Winning controversial decisions is something Morales shares with Ayala. Both are promoted by Las Vegas-based Bob Arum, and they tend to be favored by judges in Las Vegas.

Not everyone is convinced Ayala deserved his decision over Bones Adams in their first fight or over Hugo Dianzo last year. He fought the Dianzo fight in the friendly confines of Fort Worth's Convention Center. And he won the Adams decision at the Mandalay Bay, his second home.

Who actually deserved the victories in Ayala's two fights against Tapia is also fiercely debated. Whoever it was, the 24 rounds of action brought out their best.

Ayala has great respect for Morales, but doesn't go overboard with it. Because like all the best fighters, he has utter confidence in himself.

"I will have had plenty of time to prepare for this fight and this weight," he said. "And when I come in, I will be a strong 126-pounder. It might make me a little slower, but I will be stronger.



Both Morales and Ayala have been involved in controversial decisions. A lot of people thought Espadas should have gotten the nod when he fought Morales in February 2001 (top). The decision received in his March '01 bout with Hugo Dianzo (above) was equally as unpopular.

"People forget that Morales hasn't campaigned at featherweight his whole career. He did move up from bantamweight. And at featherweight, he's not as devastating a knockout puncher as he was. All his knockouts were at 122 and 118. But he's got power."

And heart?

"Heart, definitely. You know he's not the type to be stopped. He's got a strong chin to go with his heart. But I will push his buttons to the limit. A lot of his weaknesses have been exposed in his past couple of fights. I'm not saying he won't have corrected them. I thought he won that second Barrera fight he faded at the end.

"What I have to do is work my w without getting hit. He's not my firs fighter, though. Johnny Bredahl was ta probably a slicker boxer."

Often promoters don't like to pit t their own top fighters against each o because one of them has to lose. But t what Arum is doing in this one.

It's a move a smart promoter makes w he thinks one of the fighters is about to slipping. The question is, which fighter?

Ivan Goldman is THE RING's West correspondent.

Special Section

BOXING'S MOST OVERRATED & UNDERRATED

An 18-Category Analysis

By William Dettloff

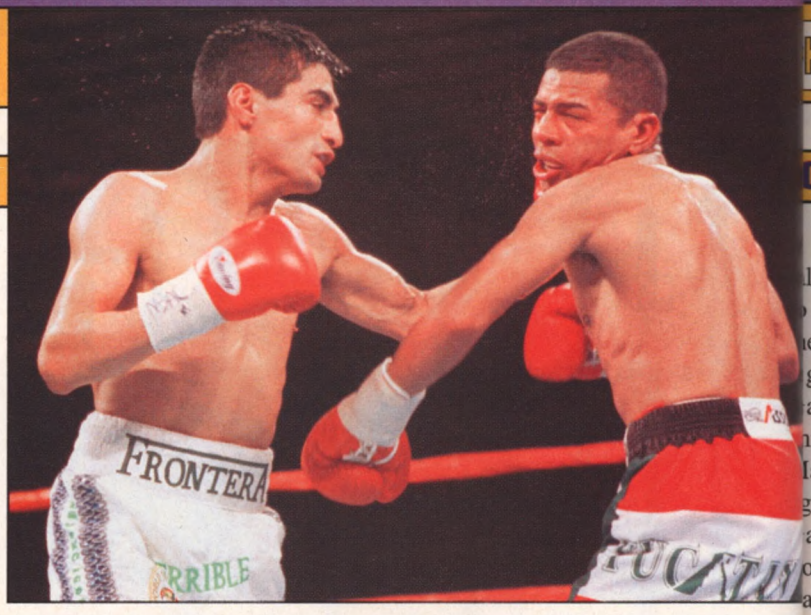
If you're like us, you have opinions on everything: who the best fighters are, the best commentators, the best punchers. You also know who the worst ones are—at everything. The thing is, inevitably, someone you think is the worst will be another guy's best. Someone you think is ridiculously overrated may be underrated in the eyes of your buddies. That's a big part of the fun of this business—rating a guy in his specialty and arguing your case this way or that.

Boxing may be the perfect vehicle for this kind of activity. No other sport is less numbers-driven and therefore more open to subjectivity. And in no other sport are fewer of the participants held one way or another by everyone. For every guy who tells you this or that announcer or puncher or prospect is the best thing since round card girls, another will ask what the hell you're talking about. Isn't it great?

In this issue, THE RING EXTRA brings you the most overrated and underrated of just about everything you can think of that drives the fight game. You'll probably agree with about half of it, which is okay by us, since the opinions expressed aren't necessarily shared by those on THE RING staff. They are, for the most part, the manic rantings of a hopelessly entrenched fight junkie who has way too many opinions. Just like you.

PUNCHER

Overrated

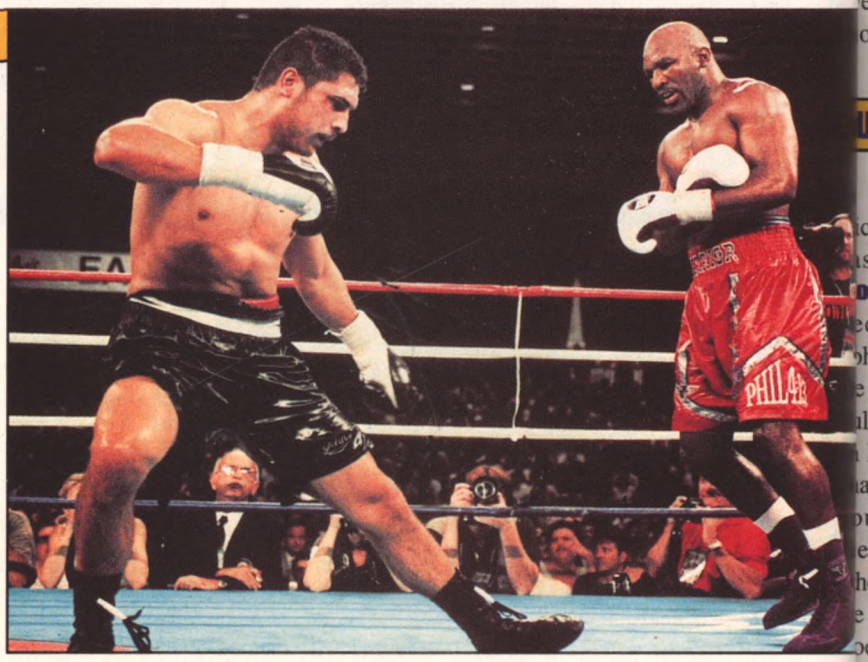


Espadas can tell you Morales' punch isn't all it's cracked up to be

It may seem like **Erik Morales** lost his punch when he moved up to featherweight from junior featherweight. After all, since the jump, he's gone the distance in all three of his title fights; Guty Espadas, In Jin Chi, and Marco Antonio Barrera all handled his best shots with relative ease. But Morales didn't lose a killer punch when he moved up, because you can't lose something you never had. "El Terrible" has always been a sharp, crisp puncher, but never a devastating one, despite notching a few highlight reel knockouts. Remember the nine-round pasting he gave Juan Carlos Ramirez a few years back when he hit Ramirez with everything but Tijuana and still couldn't take him out? How about when he did the same to poor John Lowey and could get no better than a stoppage on cuts? He never made Wayne McCullough take a backward step, and Barrera walked right through his punches in their first fight, as well as the second.

Dishonorable mention: British junior welterweight **Ricky Hatton** looks like Pipino Cuevas when he gets that hook working, but we won't believe his punch is all it's purported to be until he uses it to take out a legitimate top-15 guy.

Underrated



Holyfield had Ruiz in big trouble in the third round of their first fight

It might seem ridiculous to credit **Evander Holyfield's** punch when you consider that he went 36 rounds with John Ruiz and 24 with Lennox Lewis and never once scored an official knockdown. This despite the habit of both Ruiz and Lewis to wilt when caught cleanly. Nevertheless, this current 40-year-old, 220-pound Holyfield can hit. It wasn't that Ruiz took a lot of Holyfield's shots and withstood them; he just rarely gave Holyfield an opportunity to punch in combination. Whenever Holyfield was able to pull himself out of a clinch and punch, he hurt Ruiz several times seriously. And why was it that Lewis fought so cautiously against Holyfield in both of their fights, despite his size advantage? Because he respected Holyfield's power. No one is saying Holyfield is the second coming of Earnie Shavers. But he hits harder than you think, and if you don't believe us, ask Hasim Rahman.

Honorable mention: Only about a third of **Paulie Ayala's** wins have come by kayo, but remember how he wobbled Bones Adams in their first fight? Even chinned Johnny Tapia spent a brief moment on rubber in the 12th round of his first fight with Ayala. Yes, Ay always in shape and his skills are good, but he couldn what he does if he didn't carry some pop too.

Overrated

People often equate mental toughness with the ability to take a punch. That's why they think **Arturo Gatti** has a great chin. They're wrong. Gatti doesn't have a great chin. He has an average one. Maybe even a below-average one. Over his career, Gatti has been badly hurt, floored, or stopped by Tracy Patterson, Wilson Rodriguez, Gabriel Ruelas, Angel Manfredy, Ivan Robinson, Oscar De La Hoya, and Micky Ward. How many of those guys are considered big punchers? Maybe we'll give you Ruelas, and we'll concede Ward, at least as a bodypuncher. But Patterson was a counterpuncher, Robinson a feather-fisted boxer. Manfredy has never been a one-punch guy and he's never knocked down any of his other first-rate opponents. De La Hoya wasn't a huge hitter at 147, and what did Rodriguez do before or after the Gatti fight? Gatti has a mountain of heart, and you won't find a tougher guy anywhere. But his chin is a little soft. It doesn't take much to hurt him. Really, isn't that why his fights are so exciting?

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

A single left from Manfredy had Gatti down and nearly out

Dishonorable mention: Guys have been raving for years about what a great chin **Vinny Paz** has. This is based on what exactly? His wins over Greg Haugen a hundred years ago? Or the time Roy Jones blew him out of the ring?

Underrated

See how long it takes you to picture these two things: first, the last time you saw **Stevie Johnston** in an easy fight; and second, the last time you saw Johnston hurt. The first takes a little while, but if you saw him stop Julio Alvarez in the second round in February 2000, you might think that qualifies. Or maybe his sixth-round stoppage of Demetrio Ceballos in '98 does it for you. The point is you had to work a little to get either of them. The guy doesn't have a lot of easy fights. Still working on the time you saw him hurt, right? Come on, try to picture it: He takes a shot, does a little stutter step, wobbles around. Can't do it, right? It's because it doesn't happen. Johnston has fought Sharmba Mitchell, Cesar Bazan (twice), Angel Manfredy, Jose Luis Castillo (twice), Alejandro Gonzalez, and a host of other tough-ass lightweights. He takes way more shots than he should, yet we've never seen him so much as blink from any of them.

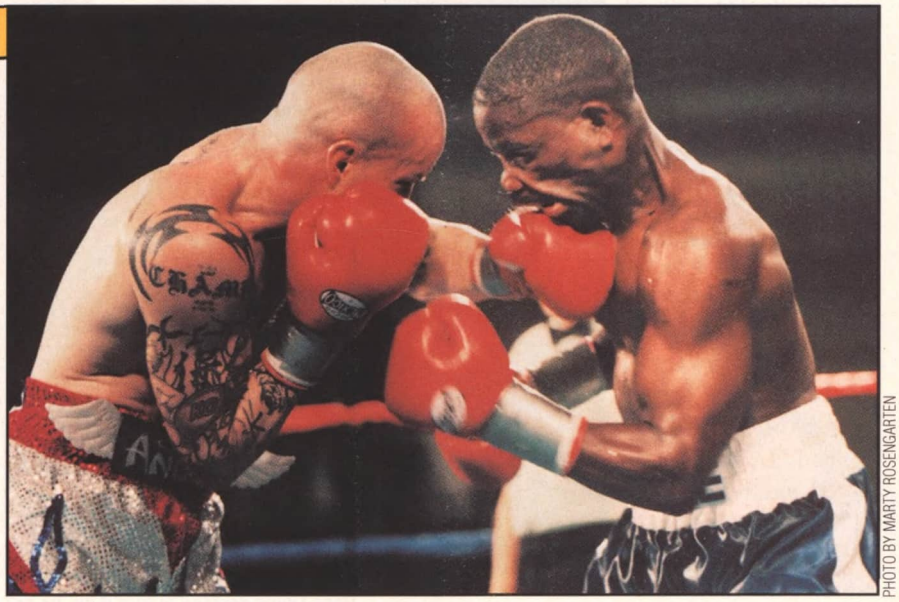


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Try your best Angel, but you won't hurt Johnston

Honorable mention: You can say it's because he never gets caught, but there's a time in almost every fight when **Roy Jones** takes a few on the chin. Only Lou Del Valle was able to floor him, and even that was a half slip.

FINISHER

Overrated

Hamed failed to put away mediocre Calvo

We know everyone's down on him right now, but it will only take a good knockout or two before everyone starts hollering again about what a great finisher **Naseem Hamed** is. Let's remember: "The Prince" was a heavy favorite going into his fight with Marco Antonio Barrera, in case you've forgotten, and it was because the guy's a born puncher. His knockouts of Augie Sanchez, Kevin Kelley, Wilfredo Vazquez, Manuel Medina, Vuyani Bungu, Paul Ingle, and a lot of others made for a great highlight reel. But being a good puncher doesn't necessarily make you a great finisher. Hamed is proof. We'll give you Bungu, who went down and stayed there from one shot. But how many times was Vazquez hurt before Hamed finally finished him? Four or five times? And Ingle, too. Sanchez hung around for a while too after being rocked, and Kelley, as faded as he was, kept getting up. Medina getting pounded for three or four rounds straight before finally caved in. In his last fight, Hamed was supposed dust Manuel Calvo with ease. It never happened. A lot guys can punch, but being able to finish is a scie Hamed hasn't mastered it yet.

Dishonorable mention: He's tough as hell and a enough puncher, but if **Omar Sheika** finished everyone was able to stun, he'd be undefeated.

Underrated

Once Lewis decided to turn it up, he got rid of Tyson

Because of his recent violent destruction of Mike Tyson, and right before it his one-punch kayo of Hasim Rahman, it's almost hard to remember that a lot of the time **Lennox Lewis** fights timidly. But he does. Think back to the Holyfield fights, the David Tua fight, the first Rahman fight, maybe even the second Oliver McCall fight. Indeed, Lewis' occasional passivity is one of the reasons he's never caught on that much with the American fight crowd. A second result is that people think he can't finish. They're wrong. When Lewis can't hurt you, he doesn't press it. He's happy to box. He probably prefers it that way. He's also happy to take his sweet time in getting you to the point that you're ready to go. Then he'll step on the gas, but not a moment before. When he does, you're done. Ask Andrew Golota or Michael Grant. Ask Tyson Francois Botha or Shannon Briggs. Lewis is one best finishers in the game.

Honorable mention: He isn't what he used to b this much is still true: If you're in the ring with **Tyson** and he hurts you, the end is right around the

Overrated

Mosley attacked Forrest on occasion, but never to the body

It's easy to jump on a guy who's lost his last two fights, but marking **Shane Mosley** as the game's most overrated bodypuncher makes good sense. Here's why: Before his consecutive losses to Vernon Forrest, a lot of guys were calling Mosley the best bodypuncher in the game. Not Vassiliy Jirov, not Micky Ward, but Mosley. But against Forrest, Mosley's body attack, which was so impressive against John-John Molina, John Brown, Golden Johnson, and others, was entirely absent. It wasn't even as though Mosley tried to work the body for a while and gave up, or that he scored well to the body but it had no effect. There was no body attack. Period. Forrest completely nullified it. You never got the sense that Mosley could turn it around with a bodyshot like Ward always can, or that he was dedicated to making it work, like Jirov is. Forrest shut down Mosley's body attack like it never existed. That means Mosley isn't the best there is at it.

Dishonorable mention: Some guys are still in love with that old **Mike Tyson** combination—right to the body, right uppercut to the head. Trouble is, Tyson hasn't landed a bodyshot to good effect (except against hopeless Julius Francis) in more than 10 years.

Underrated

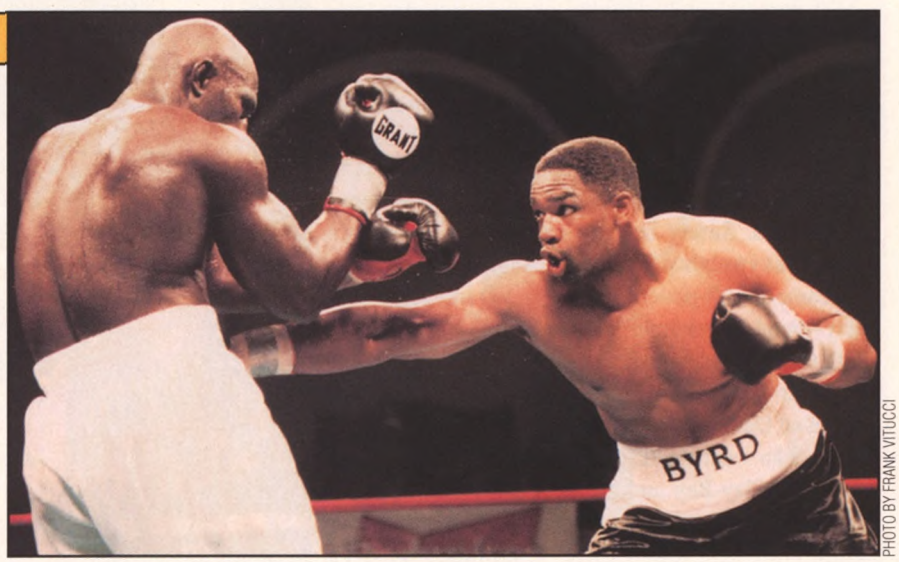


PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Nobody works the body with as much subtle effectiveness as Byrd

Feather-fisted boxers like **Chris Byrd** aren't supposed to punch to the body. Bodypunchers are supposed to be face-first guys like Vassiliy Jirov, or short pressure fighters like Leonard Dorin. But Byrd is a master of the art and is probably the best bodypuncher in the heavyweight division. Every Byrd victory features good body work. It rarely gets noticed because, unlike most guys, he doesn't wind up with big hooks when his opponent is covered up. He doesn't bang away at a guy's flanks. Byrd does it on the inside and it mixes in with everything else he does. Put it this way: David Tua has never been closer to taking an eight-count than he was when a pair of lefts to the body from Byrd doubled him over. You have to watch Byrd closely to see what he's doing in there. Do it and you'll see good business getting done downstairs.

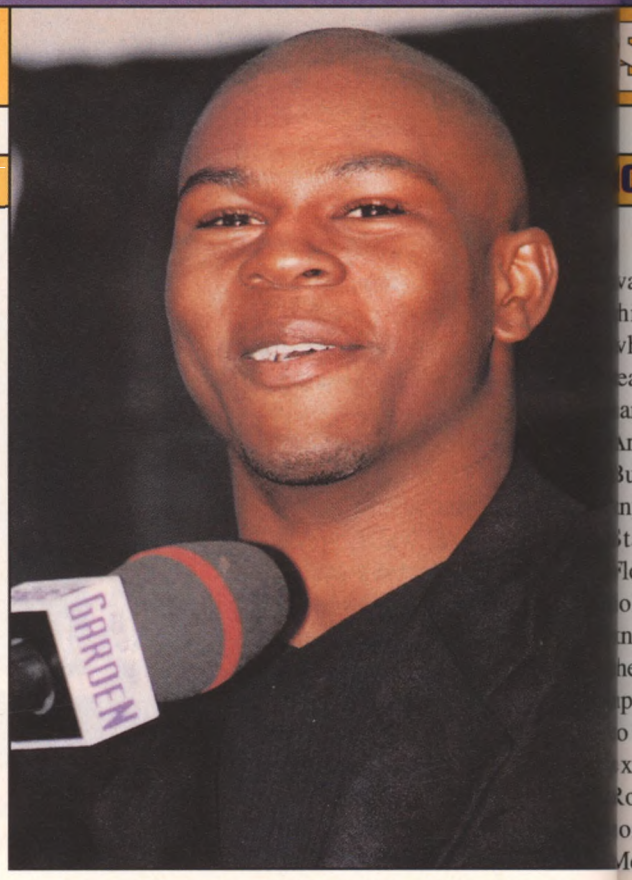
Honorable mention: When people talk about the good things **Oscar De La Hoya** does in the ring, they rarely mention the body work. Why not? De La Hoya's hook to the liver is one of the best punches in his arsenal. Remember the one that put away Derrell Coley?

PROSPECT

Overrated

If half the battle in becoming a hot prospect is looking the part, then everyone's right about **Jermain Taylor**. He's good-looking, he has fast hands, he's light on his feet, and he says the right things. He's also showcased all over the place, with most of his fights appearing on television. There's just one problem: To us, he looks an awful lot like the same kid who was fighting two-minute rounds in headgear two years ago. Don't get us wrong; Taylor's been matched aggressively for a young kid, so it's not as though he's being babied. And he's come through with a win each time out. But is he ever going to improve? He's fast. He has a good jab. We get that part. We're just not sure there's anything else there, and some guys are raving like he's the second coming of Sugar Ray Leonard. We don't buy it. Our bet is that the Taylor you see now is the best Taylor you're going to see. That'll be good enough to help him break the top 10 of whatever division he fills out at. But no higher.

Dishonorable mention: Does **Jeff Lacy** remind anyone else of Andrew Maynard?



Is there anything more to Taylor than his good looks and persona

Underrated

Despite being a highly decorated amateur champion, **DaVarryl Williamson** was one of the least publicized rookies to come out of the class of 2000. He still is. There are good reasons for that, we suppose. First, he wasn't an Olympian; he was just an alternate. Second, he's 34 years old already. Third, he already owns a loss. Not only that, he's "only" 6'4" and about 212 pounds. Surely he can't compete with today's super heavyweights. Right? In August, Williamson overcame a 100-pound weight disadvantage and an early-round knockdown to stretch 313-pound behemoth Corey Sanders, who was coming off a knockout win over Oleg Maskaev. Before that, Williamson destroyed Dale Crowe in three rounds—the same Dale Crowe who went the distance with Fres Oquendo and Lawrence Clay-Bey and got a technical draw against Michael Moorer. Williamson's lone loss came to tough journeyman Willie Chapman. It was Williamson's fourth fight, Chapman's 19th. Williamson isn't the reincarnation of Joe Louis and he has some problems. But he's earnest, he's unafraid of tough competition, and he can bang. Watch for him.

Honorable mention: Cripes, **Panchito Bojado** loses one fight to a tough guy and everybody forgets about him. The kid still has a ridiculous amount of talent and potential.

Williamson's quietly making waves at heavyweight

Overrated

You'd have thought **Joel Casamayor** was the next Pernell Whitaker or something, the way guys were carrying on when Casamayor won the WBA super featherweight title. Yes, he is fast and he can motor and he has some slick moves. And it'll never hurt that he's a southpaw. But Casamayor never was going to make anyone forget Willie Pep, or even Marlon Starling for that matter. Forget about Floyd Mayweather. Casamayor's a good, solid fighter, but most housewives we know could look light on their feet against the caliber of guys the Cuban was beating up before he dropped that close decision to Acelino Freitas last year. With the exception of the talented but flawed Roberto Garcia, Casamayor's championship opposition—Jongkwon Baek, Radford Beasley, Edwin Santana, Joe Morales—was marginal at best. That said, he still might have beaten Freitas had he fought his fight and boxed, rather than trying to outpunch a puncher.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Against Freitas, Casamayor didn't look like such a master boxer

Dishonorable Mention: Being a boxer might have worked against Naseem Hamed, but we think that, overall, **Marco Antonio Barrera** will be a far better and more successful prize fighter if he forgets that counterpunching stuff and gets in there and hooks to the belly like in the old days.

Underrated

Maybe he's not the most exciting guy to watch fight, and sure, he loses a lot, but **Manuel Medina** can box his ass off. And we didn't just come to this conclusion after watching him get robbed outright against Johnny Tapia last April. Medina has always been a guy who moves around a lot, makes guys miss, slaps them with a jab, and, when the opportunity is there, headbutts himself into a win. His title-winning victory over Frankie Toledo was a good example of that. But Medina was the first guy to give Naseem Hamed fits, and even in his losses he's competitive. Don't show tapes of him to aspiring amateurs and don't watch him fight expecting to see Sugar Ray Leonard or a tiny Larry Holmes. But do expect to see a slippery, cagey, intelligent, tough-as-nails counterpuncher who does enough of the fundamental things well enough to compensate for a lack of big talent. And when that doesn't work, he knows when to step forward with his head down and his opponent's scar tissue in his sights. It's all in a day's work.

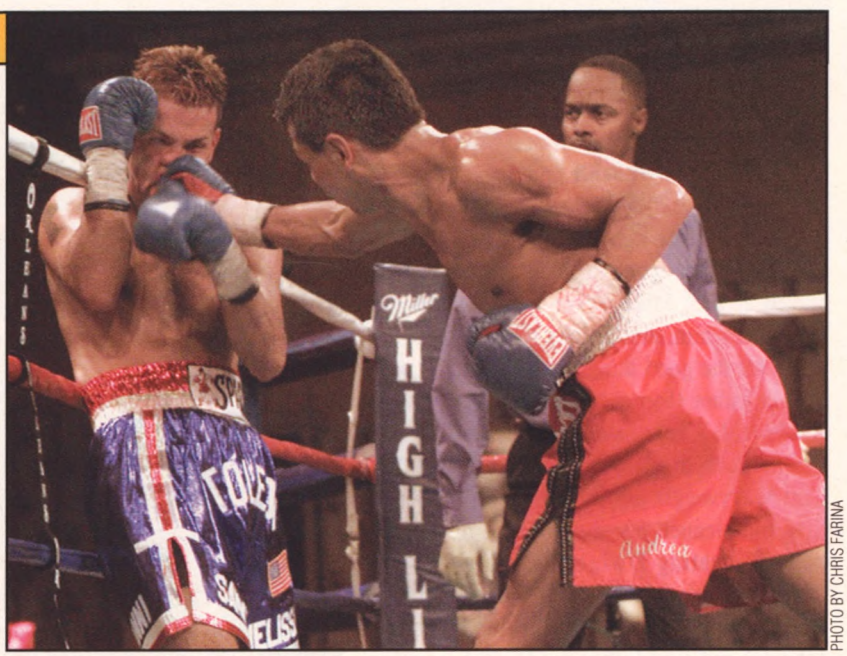


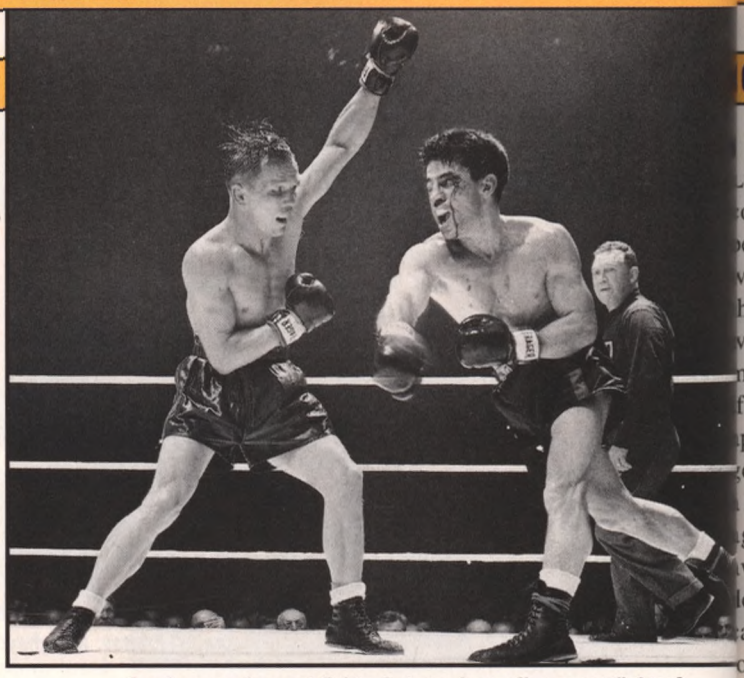
PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Awkwardly clever Medina dismantled Toledo

Honorable Mention: What's so wrong with **Steve Forbes** that fight people absolutely refuse to acknowledge his existence?

HALL OF FAMER

Overrated

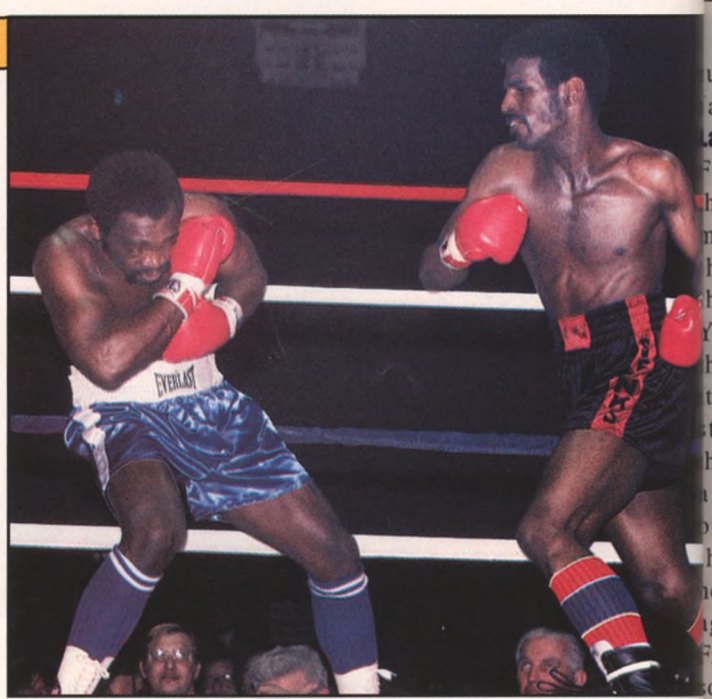


Graziano made great fights, but was he really a great fighter?

One of the great stories in the history of the fight game is the one that belongs to **Rocky Graziano**. New York street thug. Reform school delinquent. U.S. Army flunkie. World middleweight champion. Great right? *Someone Up There Likes Me* and all that. One problem: The story is far better than the fighter was. It hurts, but it's true. Graziano was a terrific right-hand puncher. He also was as tough and determined as they come. But he wasn't close to being an all-time great middleweight. At the time of the first of his three fights with Tony Zale, in 1946, Zale was already 33 years old and past his prime. By the time Zale destroyed Graziano in their third bout, he was 35. There was a slew of good middleweights around at the time that Graziano never fought: Jake LaMotta, Holly Mims, Holman Williams, Randy Turpin, Bobo Olson. The good fighters he did whip—Red Cochrane and Harold Green in their third fight—were good welterweights.

Dishonorable Mention: Prior to falling like a s to Sonny Liston, **Floyd Patterson** fought perhaps least qualified group of title challengers in heavyw championship history and still it was life and death ly every time out.

Underrated



Spinks, pictured vs. Eddie Phillips, was a dominant light heavyweight

In retrospect, maybe it would have been better if **Michael Spinks** had stayed at light heavyweight and not beaten Larry Holmes to become the first light heavyweight champ to dethrone a heavyweight titlist. If Spinks had stayed at 175, Mike Tyson never would have obliterated him, and Spinks would be remembered for the good things he did at light heavyweight rather than as a bug on Mike Tyson's windshield. Spinks made 10 title defenses, eight by knockout, in one of the three or four deepest light heavyweight divisions ever. He unified the title and cleaned out the division from top to bottom, beating Dwight Muhammad Qawi, Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, Marvin Johnson, Yaqui Lopez, Murray Sutherland, Vonzell Johnson, and every other good light heavy there was. He was never beaten at the weight and probably could have reigned for another five years if he so chose. He was that good.

Honorable mention: In his day and before coming out of retirement to face Jack Johnson, **James J. Jeffries** was as dominant as any heavyweight champion in history. But the Johnson disaster is how many te remember him.

FEMALE FIGHTER

Overrated

Lucia Rijker is the best female fighter in the world. Lucia Rijker will knock out Christy Martin. Lucia Rijker could beat a lot of guys out there. Lucia Rijker … disappeared for almost three years. There's the problem. When was the last time you saw one of the best male fighters in the world suddenly scram with no explanation, before winning a title, before ever having a defining fight, before making any big money? Never. It never happens because if a fighter is that good, he doesn't just stop doing it for no apparent reason. And if he does, it means he wasn't that good to begin with. In late-1999, Rijker could have made a hell of a lot of money in the biggest women's fight ever, against Martin. It was right there. Instead she walked away. She never said she was retiring, or what she was doing, she just stopped fighting. Except for that gym altercation she had with Martin, which, by most accounts, she lost. Rijker finally fought again last February, against an opponent who was 10-25-1. Too late.

Dishonorable mention: Bridgett Riley looks great in a pair of trunks and a tube top. But then, so does Mia St. John.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Rijker celebrates with Emanuel Steward after her first win in more than two years

Underrated

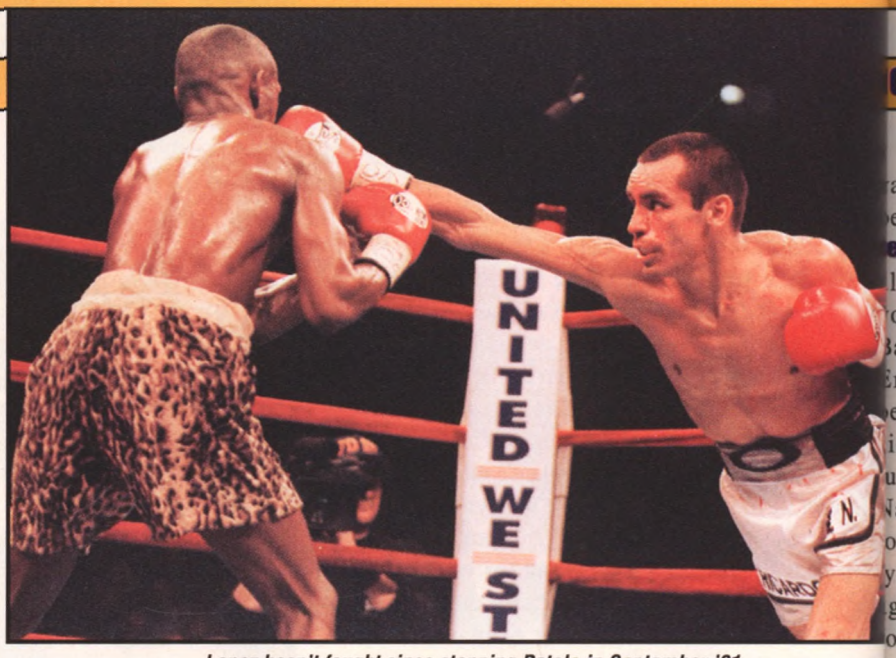
A lot of critics jumped all over Jacqui Frazier-Lyde, **Laila Ali**, and Freeda Foreman when the three of them decided, more or less around the same time, that they wanted to box. You couldn't blame the critics too much. It reeked of a sham, a stunt on the part of the daughters to make a buck off the names of their famous fathers. But when the hell has a sham been against the rules in boxing? Anyway, in the case of Frazier-Lyde, and especially Foreman, the insults were somewhat justified—neither can fight very much, even if their hearts are into it. But Ali isn't terrible. In fact, she's not bad. She can move. She sits down on her punches pretty well. Some of them she throws straight. She kind of knows what she's doing in there and, like Frazier-Lyde and Foreman, she has heart. She's no Christy Martin, but we think she deserves better than she's gotten. As far as the great majority of women's boxing goes, the girl can fight.

Ali (vs. Kendra Lenhart) is more than just some hyped-up gimmick fighter

Honorable mention: She doesn't get as much press as some of the others out there, but **Elena Reid** is hot *and* she can fight.

POUND-FOR-POUND ENTRANT

Overrated



Lopez hasn't fought since stopping Petelo in September '01

It's been so long since we've seen **Ricardo Lopez** in a fight, we're not sure we'd recognize him if we tripped over him. He makes Ike Quartey look like Buck Smith. What's this guy's problem that he can only fight once a year? It can't be that he doesn't need the money—Don King promotes him. The last time Lopez fought was when he knocked out Zolani Petelo in September 2001. Before that, it was against Ratanapol Vorapin in December '00. Before that, Will Grigsby in October '99. Now, it's bad enough that the IBF allows one of its titleholders to defend once per year. But a lot of guys still place Lopez among the top fighters in the world, pound-for-pound. We guess you could make the argument that if all the fighters on the pound-for-pound list were the same size and entered a round-robin, Lopez might be one of the last guys standing. But shouldn't the fighters in the world have to show up to work once while?

Dishonorable Mention: We know it's blasphemy these days, but the case can be made: **Bernard Hopkins** has been one A-list fighter in his career. Just one.

Underrated

Tszyu showed off his underrated boxing skills against Tackie

It's a shame that it took a one-punch knockout over Zab Judah to get **Kostya Tszyu** the recognition he's always deserved from the American fight press. Although most agree, finally, that he's a legitimate top-10 pound-for-pound guy, a lot of folks put him down near the bottom of the ratings. Why? Consider: He unified the 140-pound title with wins over Judah and Sharmba Mitchell; between his two title reigns, Tszyu has made 11 successful defenses; he won a major title (the IBF version) in just his 14th pro fight; he has knockout wins over Rafael Ruelas, Miguel Angel Gonzalez, Mitchell, Diobelys Hurtado, and Judah, and decision wins over top-rated Oktay Urkal and Ben Tackie. Speaking of the Tackie fight, when was the last time you saw a puncher like Tszyu box that well? If anyone thought he'd lost the skills that made him a dominant amateur champion—and conqueror of Vernon Forrest, incidentally—the schooling he gave Tackie proved them wrong. You have to put Tszyu where he belongs: among the five or six best fighters in the world.

Honorable mention: If **Lennox Lewis** is an all-time top-10 or top-12 heavyweight champion, and he's showing no signs of being past his physical prime, shouldn't he be everybody's top-10 pound-for-pound list today?

Overrated

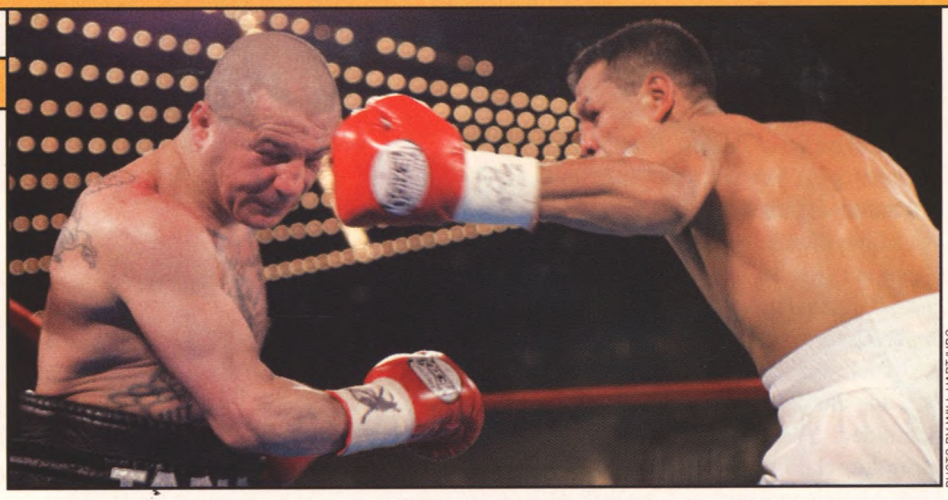


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

If featherweight is so great, why are fading vets like Tapia and Medina still in the top five?

Some guys can't stop yammering about how the best division in boxing is **featherweight**. What's all the fuss about? Yes, you have Marco Antonio Barrera. But you also have Erik Morales, who has been wholly inconsistent since moving up from junior feather. You have Naseem Hamed, who has fought once, unimpressively, since getting spanked by Barrera a year-and-a-half ago. You have Manuel Medina, who has 12 losses, Johnny Tapia, really a bantamweight past his prime, and Derrick Gainer, who's fought three times in two years. Yes, Juan Manuel Marquez can fight and Julio Pablo Chacon looks interesting, and Frankie Toledo and Daniel Seda are competent. But are they stars? A lot of guys like to throw Paulie Ayala and Manny Pacquiao and Bones Adams in there to show how great the class is. But those guys are just junior feathers contemplating moving up, and some people have been lumping them in with Barrera, et al, for a year or two. That's like saying the welterweights are great because of all the good junior welterweights.

Dishonorable Mention: A small but vocal minority insists that the current **heavyweight** class is much better than we think. Not so long as John Ruiz is rated among the top five.

Underrated

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Jones is so talented, he makes solid contenders like Gonzalez look hopeless

Is the **light heavyweight** division as bad as everyone says it is? Or does Roy Jones make it look that way? Both those who worship Jones and those who vilify him will tell you the light heavyweight class is among the weakest in the sport. But how can you say that Reggie Johnson, for example, can't fight? Or Antonio Tarver, one of the most accomplished amateurs of the last 30 years? Or Eric Harding? We know Dariusz Michalczewski hasn't fought the best guys out there, but at this writing he's 46-0. Montell Griffin beat James Toney twice. Do you think that if Julio Gonzalez were a featherweight he couldn't be in the top 10 or 12? Sure he could. David Telesco isn't a bum either. And Bruno Girard and Lou Del Valle are both better and more proven than a lot of the guys who've squeaked into the top 10 in many of the more highly regarded divisions.

Honorable Mention: People think that outside of Oscar De La Hoya, Fernando Vargas, and Winky Wright, no one can fight at **junior middleweight**. They're wrong. Try Bronco McKart, Daniel Santos, Kassim Ouma, and Alex Bunema, all tough, capable pros. Throw in dazzling prospect Tokunbo Olajide, and you have a division with much more depth and potential than people realize.

FIGHT

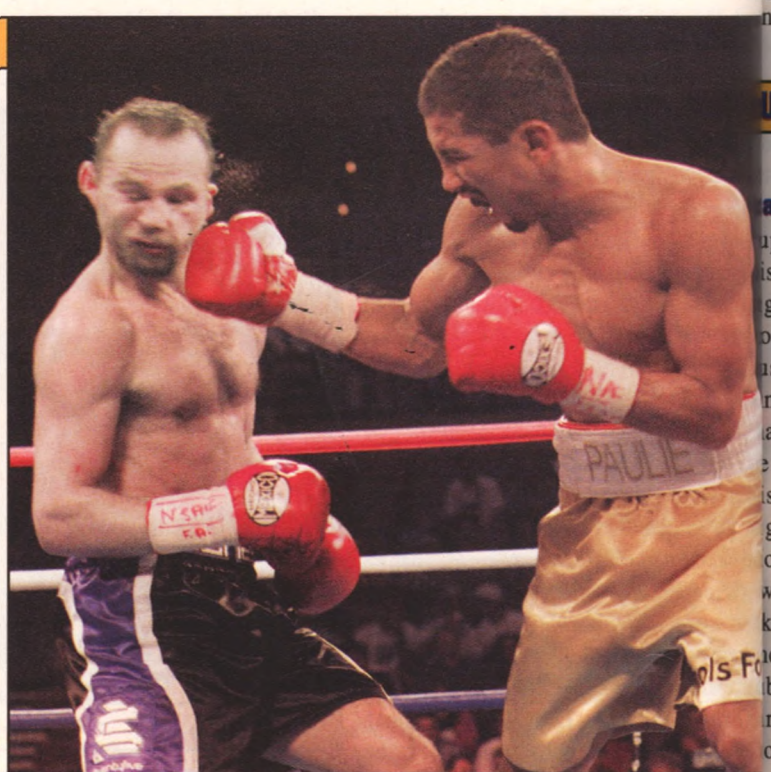
Overrated

Gonzalez-Letterlough was a good fight with a few great moments

We like a good slugfest as much as the next guy, but last year's **Julio Gonzalez-Julian Letterlough** brawl fell a little short of being a real classic. There are two reasons why: First, in the rounds when people weren't bouncing up and down off the canvas, the action was very average. And second, for the most part, the fight was one-sided. Yes, Letterlough scored three knockdowns and went down twice himself and normally that's all a fight needs to be great. But in between his knockdowns of Gonzalez, Letterlough was getting pummeled. When he wasn't on the floor, Gonzalez' greater skill level made it a mismatch. Also, the knockdowns Letterlough scored were not the result of a combination or of sustained aggression. Each came from a single blow. There were very few even, prolonged exchanges in the fight. Gonzalez dominated virtually every second except for the 24 he spent taking eight-counts. Notice how at the end there was no drama wh waited for the decision to be announced? In the truly fights, there's no such certainty.

Dishonorable mention: Sure, **Bernard Hopkins-Trinidad** was an upset, and the two fighters both wer shelf. But the bout lacked the two-way action and about three or four rounds, the suspense needed to qua the great fight some called it afterward.

Underrated



Adams and Ayala both boxed masterfully in their first fight

Why is it always the slugfests we remember most? What's wrong with two little guys testing the limits of their skill and endurance for 12 hard rounds? The **Paulie Ayala-Bones Adams** fight in August 2001 was a wonderful fight, the kind that too frequently gets lost and forgotten whenever Arturo Gatti bleeds all over everything, or when Micky Ward, if you can imagine, falls behind early in a fight, then comes on to win. Not that those fights aren't great, too. But Ayala-Adams I featured skill and combinations and defense and moves you don't see a lot. There weren't a lot of haymakers, and no one was bleeding from a gaping head wound when it was over. No one's eyes were swollen shut, and neither fighter required a week-long hospital stay. In fact, there wasn't even a knockdown. The decision, which was bad but clearly not the worst we've ever seen, detracted from it to a degree. But it was a tight, wonderfully fought contest between a pair of skilled, well-conditioned fighters. What a fight.

Honorable mention: Floyd Mayweather-Jesus Chavez, in which the Mexican challenger put up a fight and actually won a round or two along the wa more than we could have hoped for going in.

FIGHTER

Overrated

There's a reason Judah looked so ordinary against Hector Quiroz

You would have thought that **Zab Judah's** second-round knockout loss to Kostya Tszyu would have put things in perspective. It didn't. A lot of guys still insist that Judah's a pound-for-pound type and as evidence they point to Jay Nady's quick stoppage in the Tszyu fight, or what they saw as Judah's dominance in the first round. Really, there are stoppages more premature and questionable than that one every month. And if you look at the tape of that first round, there was never a moment when Tszyu was in trouble. At one point, Judah flurried with about 10 punches. Maybe three landed. Judah is such a fast guy and such a gifted one physically that it's easy to watch him and think he's doing more than he is. Trust us—he isn't. He's not consistent enough to be the fighter many think he is, which is why he squeaks by against an Omar Weis instead of winning comfortably. In virtually every fight there are long spells when he forgets to punch, or stands still with his chin in the air, or is just plain sloppy. He's immensely talented. But he has a lot of work to do.

Dishonorable mention: Some people look at the undefeated (at least officially) record and forget that **Willie Jorrin** has no business still being in the mix in a division as deep as junior featherweight.

Underrated

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Calzaghe stood toe-to-toe and dominated Brewer

It's easy to underrate **Joe Calzaghe**. For starters, he's a super middleweight. That's the kiss of death right there. Also, he fights out of the United Kingdom, which makes him a little suspicious in the eyes of many American fight fans. Lastly, and maybe as a result of the first two, he fights a lot of stiffs. For all of his squawking about wanting to fight Roy Jones or Bernard Hopkins, Calzaghe has spent an awful lot of time against guys like Mario Veit, Will McIntyre, and Richie Woodhall. Here's the rub: When he steps up, he comes through. He came through against Omar Sheika, and most recently, against veteran and former titlist Charles Brewer. Maybe Brewer is now on the downside of what has been a rocky career anyway, but he still has the guns to hurt a lot of super middleweights, and Calzaghe stood right in his face and simply outfought him. Calzaghe's not going to make the pound-for-pound list anytime soon, and his fights aren't always particularly pleasing to the eye. But he's better than a lot of us think.

Honorable mention: There may not be a more bland titlist out there than **Eric Lucas**, but the Canadian super middleweight beltholder can fight pretty well. In his last fight, he handled Omar Sheika far more easily than we expected.

REFEREE

Overrated

People are so used to calling **Joe Cortez** a top referee that they do it even though he's not anymore. When Cortez officiates a big fight these days, you can count on at least one blown call.

Dishonorable mention: We don't know how the intrusive and frequently panicky **Laurence Cole** keeps getting big-fight assignments, but he does.

Underrated

No one ever talks about **Fr Cappuccino** when discussing exce referees. They should. And not just be he stayed calm and didn't stop Ward when a lot of guys would have.

Honorable mention: If you're ing for an official who doesn't tak nonsense in the ring and always mak right call, look up **Dr. James Jen-K**

Cappuccino's eccentric, but effective

TV BROADCASTING

Overrated

Granted, there have been several wonderful fights and the in-studio stuff is terrific, but let's face it: A lot of the time, the bouts on **ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*** reek.

Dishonorable mention: For all we've heard about how **Showtime** is gaining on HBO as the game's premier cable network, the shows there still look a little bush-league in comparison.

Underrated

You don't have to speak Span enjoy the fights on **Telefutura**. Ch are good on any given night that see an excellent fight.

Honorable mention: Afte incredible start, **HBO's *Boxing Dark*** series leveled out and be almost routine. Then Emanuel St replaced Roy Jones and we had a again to stay up late.

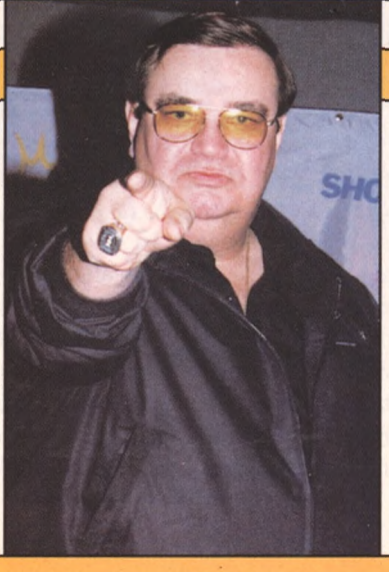
Beyond the studio,* FNF *struggles

TV COMMENTATOR

Overrated

We've never quite understood the affection for **"Colonel" Bob Sheridan**, who for the last hundred years has been calling the foreign overseas broadcasts for Don King shows. Is it because no one's listening?

Dishonorable mention: Who's telling **Teddy Atlas**, an intelligent, articulate guy, that when he's calling a fight, his voice has to fluctuate all over like he's talking to a three-year-old?



Underrated

What a shame it is that a true pr **Barry Tompkins** is wasting aw FOX SportsNet, which doesn't eve its viewers when the fight they're w ing is a month old.

Honorable Mention: You know is a tough business when a capable, u pable veteran like **Al Bernstein** gets doing the Holmes-Butterbean fight. D think he has a picture of Max Kellerm a dartboard somewhere?

Col. Bob wants you ... to listen to him

BOXING'S MOST OVERRATED & UNDERRATED

PROMOTER

Overrated

Wasn't **J Russell Peltz** the guy who used to promote those exciting, competitive cards at the Blue Horizon? What ever happened to that guy?

Dishonorable mention: Never forget: **Bob Arum** is the guy who repeatedly brought you Butterbean, Mia St. John, and some of the worst big-fight undercards in history.

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

Underrated

You don't hear much about them, but **Interbox** draws tens of thousands to shows in Canada of all places, and has done wonders for lightweight Leonard Dorin.

Honorable Mention: Hasim Rahman, Shane Mosley, and Kirk Johnson couldn't wait to get away from **Cedric Kushner Promotions**. Now look at them.

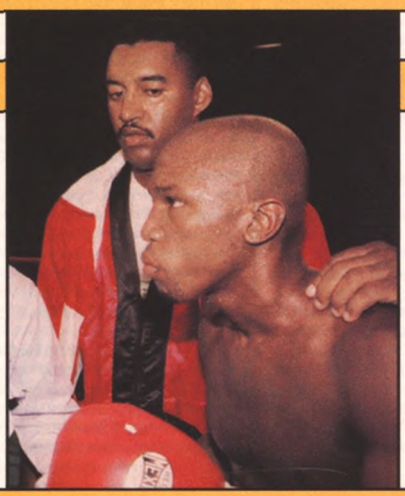
Eric Lucas has been a huge draw for Interbox in Montreal

TRAINER

Overrated

If **Floyd Mayweather Sr.** was one-eighth as good as he thinks he is, he'd be Emanuel Steward. Floyd the Barber could train Oscar De La Hoya and get the same results.

Dishonorable mention: If Mike Tyson made such a big mistake leaving **Kevin Rooney**, how come Rooney isn't training a whole stable of champions by now?



Underrated

He'll never live down pressing a water-filled condom against Mike Tyson's eye in Tokyo, but **Aaron Snowell** has developed into a solid trainer. Ask Tim Austin.

Honorable mention: Australia's **Johnny Lewis** trained Jeff Fenech, Jeff Harding, and now Kostya Tszyu, but we never hear him mentioned among the elite trainers.

Snowell (with Austin) has come a long way

ARENA

Overrated

Every time there's a fight at **Madison Square Garden**, we're told that the Garden's history makes the fight bigger than it would be if it were held anyplace else. Please. At this point, it's a fight site like any other, only without the slot machines.

Dishonorable mention: The Blue Horizon is a great place to watch a fight if you don't mind floods in the restroom and the walls falling apart around you.

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Is there really anything special about the Garden?

Underrated

The recent return of big fights to the **Trump Taj Mahal** in Atlantic City reminded us that the Jersey shore's not a bad place to catch a fight. There's booze, gambling, beautiful women, and big parking garages. What's not to like?

Honorable mention: Everyone gripes about how the casinos get all the fight action, but fight digs don't come any nicer than the newly remodeled arena at the **Mohegan Sun** in Connecticut.

BACK ISSUES OF KO

Back issues of several editions of *KO Magazine,* the acknowledged leader in boxing journalism, are still available in limited quantity. Since its inception in 1980, *KO* has become known for its quality stories and columns and peak-action photographs. Don't delay. Supplies are running out!

June 1983: WBA Jr. Middleweight Champion Davey Moore: Bracing For Duran's Last Stand. Color Pinup: Donald Curry. Interview: Pinklon Thomas. Also: Duran-Cuevas, Hagler-Sibson.

Aug. 1983: Michael Spinks: King Of The Light Heavyweights ... But The Glory Can't Erase The Sadness. Color Pinup: Johnny Bumphus. Interview: Jones & Rappaport. Also: Jones-McCrory, Pryor-Arguello II preview, world's best fighter poll, Jeff Chandler, Mark Breland, Leon Spinks.

Oct. 1983: Is Larry Holmes Finished? Color Pinup: Greg Page. Interview: Marvis Frazier. Also: Marvin Hagler, Bobby Chacon, Jack Dempsey.

July 1984: Donald Curry: "I'm Better Under Pressure." Color Pinup: Gerrie Coetzee. Interview: Curry. Also: Pipino Cuevas, John Mugabi, Bill Costello, M, Spinks-Davis.

Aug. 1984: WBC Heavyweight Champion Terrible Tim Witherspoon: A Superstar Of Tomorrow? Color Pinup: Rocky Lockridge. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Also: Marvin Hagler, Gomez-LaPorte.

Oct. 1984: Golden Boy Mark Breland: Can He Be The Next Sugar Ray? Color Pinup: Jaime Garza. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Bramble-Mancini, Sugar Ray Leonard.

Nov. 1984: Thomas Hearns: "Hagler Is Shakin' Like A Leaf On A Tree!" Color Pinup: Tim Witherspoon. Interview: Livingstone Bramble. Also: Rosario-Davis, Marlon Starling.

Jan. 1985: The Wide-Open Heavyweight Division: Who Will Take Control? Color Pinup: Bill Costello. Interview: Tyrone Crawley. Also: Harry Arroyo, Curry-Pryor, Barry McGuigan.

Feb. 1985: Gerry Cooney: How Far Can He Go This Time? Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Ray Mancini. Also: Dream fights, Hector Camacho.

March 1985: Next For Marvelous Marvin Hagler: The Only Fight That Really Matters. Color Pinup: Mike McCallum. Interview: Thomas Hearns. Also: Santos-Medal, Meza-Garza, Holmes-Bonecrusher.

May 1985: Thomas Hearns: KO Fighter Of The Year. Color Pinup: Gerry Cooney. Also: Camacho-Ramirez, Truth Williams, Year In Review.

July 1985: Aaron Pryor: Has Hawk Time Run Out? Color Pinup: Donald Curry. Interview: Greg Page. Also: Ray Mancini, James Shuler, Costello-Hatcher.

Aug. 1985: King Cobra: "Hagler-Hearns Is Done And I'm Better Than Both Of Them!" Color Pinup: John Mugabi. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Larry Holmes, Roberto Duran, DeWitt-Lee.

Dec. 1985: Pinklon Thomas: "Larry Holmes Betrayed Boxing." Color Pinup: Hagler-Mugabi. Also: Mike McCallum, Tyrell Biggs, Camacho-Ramirez.

Jan. 1986: Macho Mania! Hector Camacho Takes Aim At 10 Tough Targets. Color Pinup: Jimmy Paul. Interview: Alexis Arguello. Also: Truth Williams, Curry-McCrory.

July 1986: Tyson, McGuigan, Hagler: The Stars Catch Fire And Boxing Is Hot Again! Color Pinup: Azumah Nelson. Also: Camacho-Chavez.

Oct. 1986: They're Back!!! The Cooney Circus Returns. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Also: Jimmy Paul, Mike Tyson, Donald Curry.

Dec. 1986: Larry Holmes' Message To Mike Tyson: "Show Me You Can Kick My Butt!" Color pinup: Mark Breland. Interview: Holmes. Also: Witherspoon-Bruno, Evander Holyfield, Cruz-McGuigan, Danny Lopez.

Feb. 1987: Upset Of The Decade: Has Honeyghan Cut Short The Curry Era? Color Pinup: Marvin Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Edwin Rosario, Hector Camacho.

Aug. 1987: Sweet Victory! Sugar Ray Humbles Hagler. Color Pinup: Leonard vs. Hagler. Interview: Evander Holyfield. Also: Spinks-Cooney preview, Donald Curry.

Oct. 1987: Greatness Beckons: When Will Mike Tyson Answer The Call? Color Pinup: Michael Olajide. Interview: Tyrell Biggs. Also: Paz-Haugen, Marvin Hagler.

Nov. 1987: Michael Spinks: The War With Tyson Is Okay With Him. Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: Frankie Duarte. Also: Matthew Hilton, Hagler-Czyz.

Dec. 1987: Mike Tyson: Undisputed Heavyweight King-But Is He Losing His Loyal Subjects? Color Pinup: Matthew Hilton. Interview: Barry McGuigan. Also: Aaron Pryor, Mike McCallum.

Jan. 1988: The Collapse Of A Hero: Why Breland Never Hit The Mark Of Greatness. Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Michael Nunn, Alexis Arguello, lightweights.

Feb. 1988: Pazienza & Haugen Go For Each Other's Throats. Color Pinup: Marlon Starling. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Tate-Olajide, ESPN Boxing.

May 1988: KO Exclusive-Mike Tyson, As Only Mike Tyson Knows Him. Color Pinup: Mike McCallum. Interview: Thomas Hearns. Also: Tyson-Spinks Poll, Michael Dokes, Virgil Hill.

July 1988: Superfight History Dictates: Don't Expect The Expected From Tyson-Spinks. Color Pinup: Roger Mayweather. Interview: Dr. Ferdie Pacheco. Also: Roberto Duran, Azumah Nelson, Barkley-Olajide.

Aug. 1988: Tyson-Spinks: KO's Fearless Forecast Of Superfight '88. Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Matthew Hilton. Also: Lockridge-Knight, Evander Holyfield, Lloyd Honeyghan.

Sept. 1988: Tyson-Spinks, The Aftermath—What If Tyson Wins; What If Spinks Wins? Color Pinup: Frank Tate. Interview: Marlon Starling. Also: Barry McGuigan, Simon Brown, risk-taking.

Oct. 1988: Middleweight Terrorism: Iran Bombs The Hit Man. Color Pinup: Don Lalonde. Interview: Frank Bruno. Also: Roger Mayweather, Marvin Hagler.

Jan. 1989: The Troubled Times Of Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Lloyd Honeyghan. Interview: Gil Clancy. Also: Meldrick Taylor, Jeff Fenech, Boxing's Champs.

Feb. 1989: George Foreman Is Born Again. Color Pinup: Meldrick Taylor. Interview: Bill Cayton. Also: The Olympics, Davey Hilton, John Mugabi, Barry McGuigan.

Aug. 1989: Special 100th Issue. Color Pinup: Hagler vs. Hearns. Also: The *KO* Years, 50 most influential people, '80s ratings, best of *KO* Interview, year-by-year review, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Sept. 1989: "I Beat Up Tyson Before, I'll Do It Again," by Carl Williams. Color Pinup: Michael Nunn. Also: Chavez-Mayweather, Brian Mitchell, Marv Albert.

Nov. 1989: The Real Duran; The Stories Behind The Legend. Color Pinup: Orlando Canizales. Interview: Mike Trainer. Also: Edwin Rosario, Rosi-Van Horn.

Feb. 1990: George Foreman Risks A Multi-million-Dollar Shot At Tyson. Color Pinup: Brian Mitchell. Interview: Riddick Bowe. Also: Simon Brown, Molina-Lopez, East vs. West.

May 1990: Chavez vs. Taylor: The Best Matchup In The Last Five Years. Color Pinup: Daniel Zaragoza. Interview: Pernell Whitaker. Also: Leonard-Hearns, Glenn McCrory, Prince Charles Williams.

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Aug. 1991: Desert Storm II: Will The Tyson-Ruddock Rematch Be Different? Color Pinup: Loreto Garza. Interview: Michael Carbajal. Also: Brown-Blocker, Fenech-Nelson preview, Harold Brazier, Yuh-Carbajal.

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THE RESURRECTION OF DAVID TUA

This Time Pride Comes After A Fall

By Joe Santoliquito

Sanctuary was to be found in the comfort of a warm bed, in the house David Tua bought his parents with the bonus money he received when he signed his first big-time promotional contract. Surrounded by family, Tua had a place to hide away from his most public embarrassment, somewhere he could feel safe from the stabs of criticism he received after his lopsided loss to heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis.

Tua was seriously contemplating retirement after the Lewis humiliation. He considered packing up his bags and getting away from it all, not even telling anyone about it. Just disappearing. But first, Tua wanted to unwind and get some distance. He needed a break from being yanked in every direction by the media, family, friends, and disappointed fans. So he retreated to his parents' home.

It turned out to be everything Tua *wasn't* looking for.

"I ended up staying at my parents' home for a few days, and every day I would go to sleep and wake up with them watching the fight, *my fight* against Lewis," Tua recalled with a sigh. "My family was sitting there around the TV watching me get my ass kicked. I thought it was a nightmare, I really did, like I was dreaming this stuff. One day, I couldn't take it anymore, and I wanted them to explain what this was all about. 'What the hell is going on here? You guys live off all of this?'

"Then, my father pulled me aside and sat me down. He said, 'We're proud of you, that's why we're watching the fight over again. My son fought for the heavyweight championship of the world, and we're proud of you, man.' That's the first time my father ever said that to me. I just broke down and cried. I knew then what I had to do. I faced my problems instead of running away from them. I couldn't go out that way, not like that."

So the resurrection of David Tua began. At first, it wasn't exactly the kind of resurrection Tua envisioned, since he lost to heavy underdog Chris Byrd in August 2001, giving a performance that in some ways damaged his reputation even more than the Lewis fight. But his two major fights since then have reversed the flow. Though he was outboxed for eight rounds against Fres Oquendo this past April, Tua came on to knock out the slippery, previously unbeaten Puerto Rican heavyweight in the ninth round. In his next fight, on August 17, Tua, 41-3 (36), vaulted himself back into the upper tier of the heavyweight division with his 30-second demolition of two-time former heavyweight titlist Michael Moorer at the Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City.

There are two ways Tua typically wins fights. One was seen against Oquendo—get outworked and outboxed, then score a dramatic late-rounds kayo. Against Moorer, Tua relied on the other, more dynamic method, using his power early so he wouldn't have to worry about using it late. Tua moved right in and fired a right cross that traveled about three inches before landing on the suspect chin of Moorer, leaving his body resting on the bottom rope. Referee Rudy Battle took a look at Moorer's eyes rolled back in his head and didn't even bother to finish the count.

It's still easy to label Tua one-dimensional and to question his footwork, his ability to cut off the ring, or his low punch output. But no one will ever doubt Tua's debilitating power or his granite chin. Nor would anyone deny Tua a ranking among today's heavyweight elite.

It's a stark contrast from where "Tuaman" was a year ago, when experts derided him after the Byrd defeat. He was suddenly in the also-ran category of the division, light years from being mentioned as a possible opponent for Wladimir Klitschko, Evander Holyfield, or even an aged Mike Tyson.

"Tua shows that coming back from bad defeats is the same as coming back from getting knocked out," HBO ringside analyst Larry Merchant said. "He's shown you can bounce back when something bad happens to you in this game. It's a tremendous lift for Tua, mentally and emotionally, to come back and beat Oquendo and Moorer. This is a pretty good platform for him to get a second act in his career. I don't think it completely wipes out two devastating defeats where he was simply outboxed and outclassed, but maybe it will help to motivate him to depend on more than just his great chin and his left hook.

"He has a great weapon, but it's only great if you can use it. The fact that he threw bodypunches and right hands in that short period of time against Moorer, it shows there is a possibility he can become a more versatile fighter of his type, in the way Tyson was early on. For a guy to do what he did to Moorer, even if it's against someone who couldn't find a way to avoid or resist him, it still gets everyone's attention."

Tua's poor showing against Byrd cer-

David Tua was able to raise his hands in victory after his pulverizing defeat of Michael Moorer, in August in Atlantic City. The 30-second victory over Moorer helped restore Tua's standing in the heavyweight division, after humbling losses to Lennox Lewis and Chris Byrd.

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Tua vaulted back into the heavyweight scene with this instant knockout of two-time former heavyweight titlist Moorer. Tua's quick assault left Moorer crumpled and dazed on the canvas.

tainly got the attention of Kevin Barry, Tua's manager and now head trainer. Barry, the former New Zealand Olympian who beat Holyfield via controversial disqualification at the '84 Games, had been in Tua's corner since the start of the Samoan's pro career in '92. But it wasn't until his last three fights—knockout victories over Garing Lane, Oquendo, and Moorer—that Barry took over as the chief second.

After the loss to Byrd and the collapse of America Presents, Tua's former promotional company, Barry went looking for a new trainer to replace Joe Goossen. Tua told him to stop looking.

"David wanted me to train him," Barry said. "I had concerns about getting the best out of him, because we're so close. We made a deal with each other that at the end of every boxing session, we'd shake hands and give each other a hug, and forget whatever goes on in the gym. There's no doubting each other, and when you have that sort of relationship, you can get results."

Refurbishing the 29-year-old Tua meant going back to the basics. Barry's plan was to retool Tua by strengthening right side. They worked on Tua's flexi ty, and on improving his footwork thro explosive leg exercises. They concentr more on a body attack, de-emphasiz Tua's left hook to the head, a depende that made the fighter one-dimensional.

"It's been working," Barry said. "D knocked out Oquendo and Moorer with right hand. He has a right hand, wh makes David twice as dangerous. Th been the most pleasing aspect for me, I've been able to get something ou David that other trainers haven't.

"The more punches he throws, the ter the odds that the fight will be fini earlier. I think sometimes David under mates his own power. No one can st three or four rounds with him. I mea when I say David is the most underach ing heavyweight in the world. He sh now be wearing one of the world belts. I mean that as a compliment know we've improved since the last c from working together."

Physical improvements, however only part of the story. Tua has also tu things around mentally since the Lewi

Tua tried to distance himself from the loss he suffered against Lewis, going as far as retreating to his parents' home in New Zealand to escape the embarrassment of the one-sided defeat. But even retreating there was no help to the "Tuaman."

Byrd fights, and was thus able to perform up to his potential against Moorer.

"The fights with Lewis and Byrd were very frustrating moments for me," Tua said. "It's like preparing for an exam and you know it like the back of your hand and you study so hard, you know you're going to pass. When I didn't pass, it humbled me. I had to step outside my career and look at it from a different perspective. I lost my faith in God. I always had my faith, but I had fear, and I got nervous. I am human. I was starting to lose something that was dear and important to me. I was losing my faith and belief in God. I lost touch of who I am, I lost faith in David Tua.

"I'm grateful for the Lewis loss. I respect the fans for thinking the way they did about me. If I won that fight against Lewis, success would have gone to my head. I got caught up with things I shouldn't have been doing, so I'm grateful for the Lewis fight."

(Continued on page 62)

Most experts counted Tua out of the heavyweight title picture after his debilitating unanimous decision loss to light-punching Chris Byrd in August 2001. The defeat placed Tua in the also-ran heap of heavyweights in the minds of most observers.

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David Tua

(Continued from page 61)

To a degree, Barry kicks himself for what went on prior to the Lewis fight. Barry feels with his input, Tua could have dealt with the onslaught of attention much better than he did.

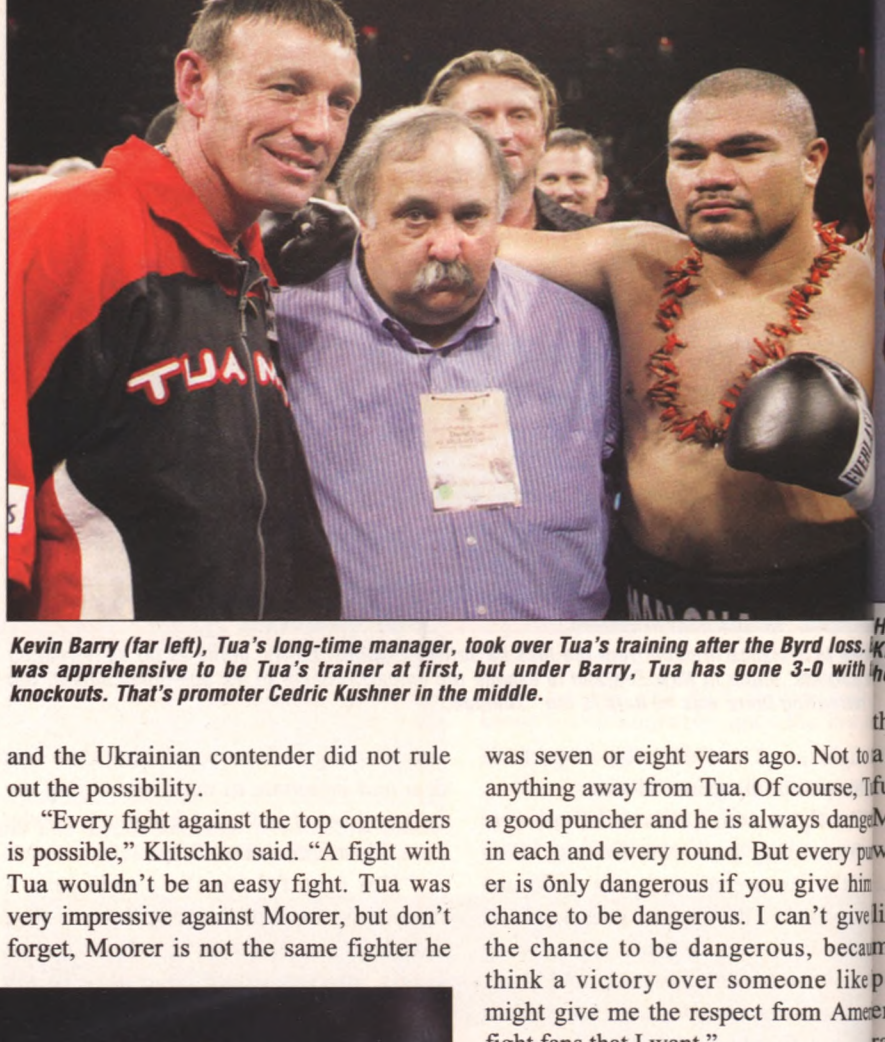
"It hurt David because he's so much better than that," Barry said. "Let's not make any excuses, Lennox Lewis is a good fighter, but there was so much hype around the fight. David let it get to him, and he got drawn into it. His head wasn't right going into that fight. All of a sudden, David is standing there in the middle of the ring at Mandalay Bay, fighting for the heavyweight championship of the world. David is out there to give the fans value, but he felt he cheated the fans, and that hurt him."

What's next for Tua is anyone's guess. Barry wants to get him back into the ring again by the end of this year. A number of possibilities have been broached, like matchups with Hasim Rahman, Holyfield, and, most intriguingly, Klitschko. HBO executives said before the Tua-Moorer fight that they would like the winner to fight Klitschko, and the Ukrainian contender did not rule out the possibility.

"Every fight against the top contenders is possible," Klitschko said. "A fight with Tua wouldn't be an easy fight. Tua was very impressive against Moorer, but don't forget, Moorer is not the same fighter he was seven or eight years ago. Not to a anything away from Tua. Of course, Tf a good puncher and he is always dange in each and every round. But every pu er is only dangerous if you give him chance to be dangerous. I can't give li the chance to be dangerous, becau think a victory over someone like p might give me the respect from Ame fight fans that I want."

Unfortunately, some insiders sus that Universum, Klitschko's German moters, won't chance their man getti the ring with a fierce puncher like i The same may be the case for the lucrative potential matchup for Tu power showdown with Tyson. Tyson ply has too many other options that a as dangerous.

"I think Tua would chew Mike T up, he'd go right through Mike Tys Merchant said without hesitation. never seen Tua hurt, much less kno down. When Tua comes out the way against Moorer, he's a pretty impo force, and Tua arguably is still in his p and is 10, 15 pounds bigger than Ty am skeptical that there will be a Klits Tua fight, because the Germans who h Klitschko won't take that chance. I think that Tua is in anyone's imme plans, and certainly John Ruiz won within 5,000 miles of him. I don't



Kevin Barry (far left), Tua's long-time manager, took over Tua's training after the Byrd loss. was apprehensive to be Tua's trainer at first, but under Barry, Tua has gone 3-0 with knockouts. That's promoter Cedric Kushner in the middle.

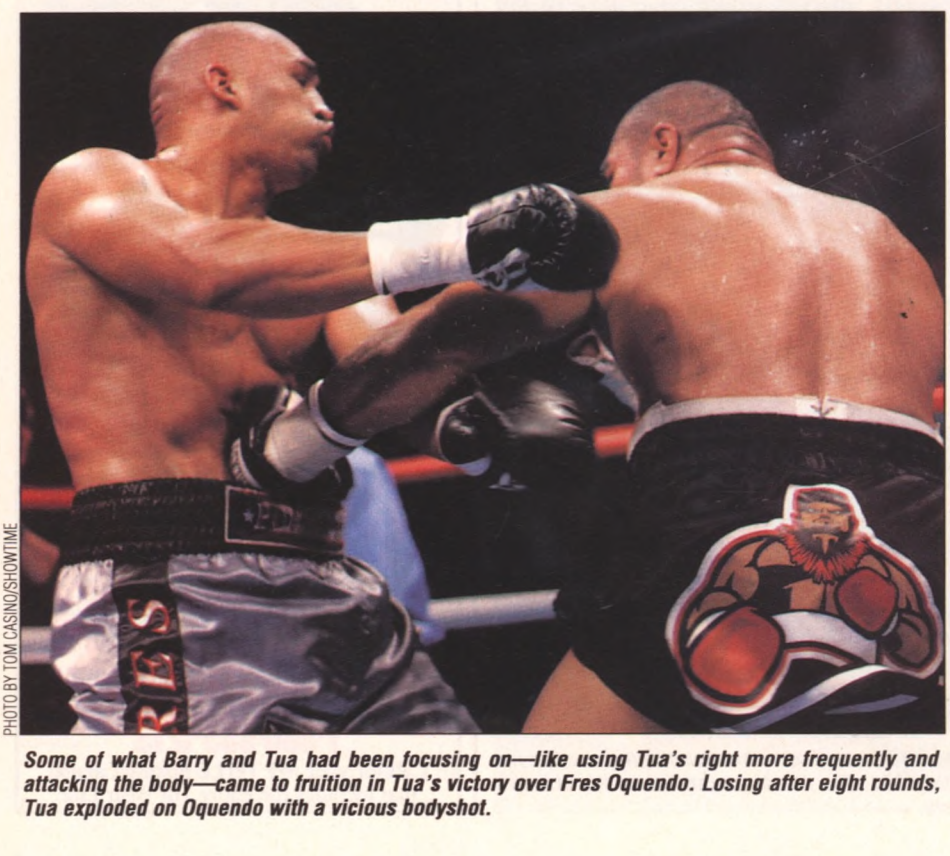
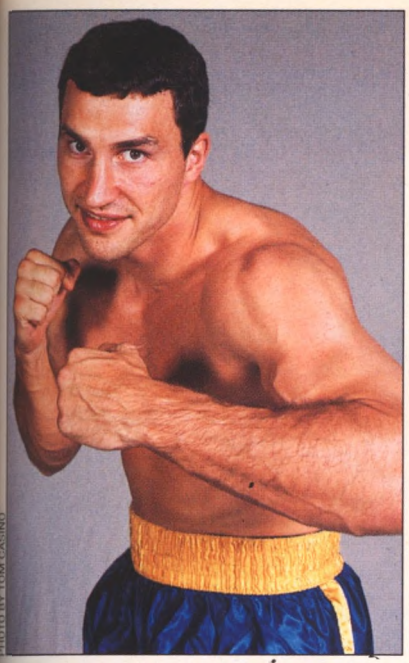


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Some of what Barry and Tua had been focusing on—like using Tua's right more frequently and attacking the body—came to fruition in Tua's victory over Fres Oquendo. Losing after eight rounds, Tua exploded on Oquendo with a vicious bodyshot.



HBO would like to match Tua against Wladimir Klitschko next, and the massive Ukrainian says he would consider taking the dangerous fight.

there are any plans that will include Tua in a title picture in the near or foreseeable future. What Tua has to do is build on the Moorer fight against whomever comes his way."

Tua is noncommittal as to whom he'd like to fight next. But he's found contentment through scaling back everything peripheral to boxing, from his ring entrances (he uses more mellow music, rather than the banging drums and conch shell horns) to his prefight preparation (which includes more contemplation time going over the fight plan, instead of blaring out guttural screams the way he used to when swinging wildly during warm-ups in his dressing room).

Tua's realized he can't run away from the past, but he's also realized time is a good healer.

"I have to move on, and that's what I'm doing," Tua said. "I have a special calling, and that's to glorify the Lord with my success in the ring. People are going to hear that and say, 'Tua's going crazy,' that I'm taking the religion thing too far. But I can walk away from boxing tomorrow and I can walk knowing that I'm the same person I was when I got into the sport. I visit kids back home in hospitals fighting for more reasons than I am. I'm lucky to be doing what I do. I've discovered there's more to life than being a bad ass." ■

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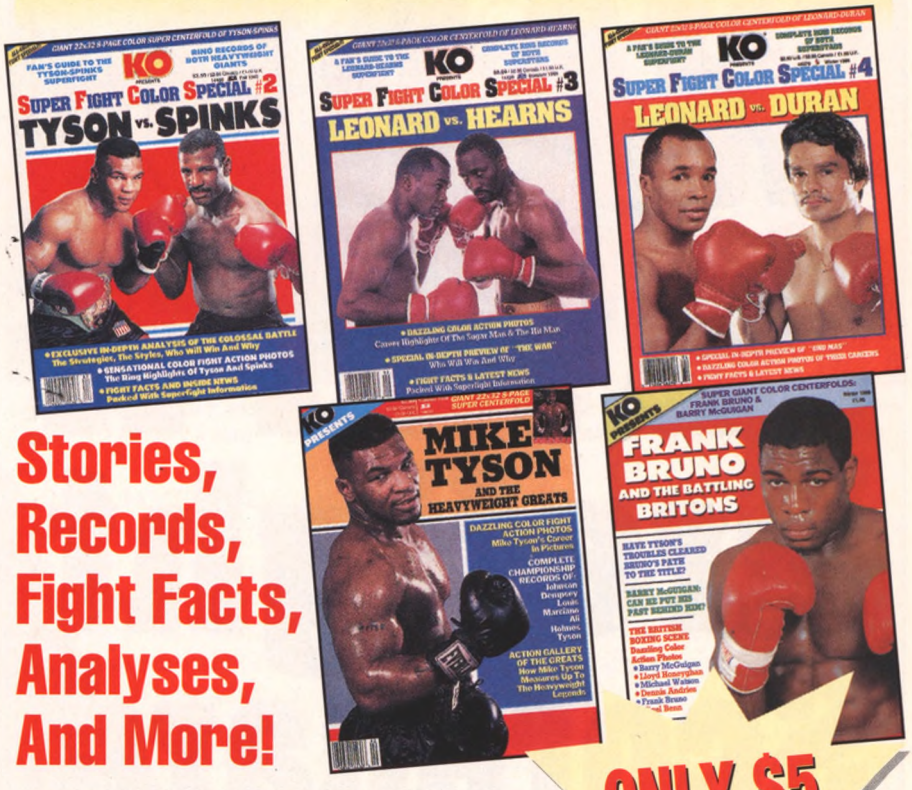

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The WARD-GATTI II Prefight Scorecard

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Can Gatti use his skills and outbox Ward a little longer this time, without letting the Massachusetts slugger lure him into a brawl? That's one of the crucial questions surrounding the November rematch.

Junior welterweight warriors Micky Ward, 38-11 (27), and Arturo Gatti, 34-6 (28), will resume hostilities on November 23, at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City. Their first encounter, May 18, at the Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, Connecticut, resulted in one of the greatest brawls in boxing history, with Ward winning a close, 10-round decision.

Expectations are running high for the rematch, and in keeping with the blue-color image of the fighters, more than 3,000 of the 12,000 seats available will be priced at $50, making the fight accessible to the average workingman and woman. Top price is $300. The bout will be televised by HBO.

Despite the magnificent nature of the first Ward-Gatti fight, many observers believe the decision could have gone either way, so in an effort to peak interest and keep the debate raging while awaiting the opening bell, THE RING has polled a panel of boxing experts and asked them who they think will win Ward-Gatti II.

JESSE JAMES LEIJA *(junior welterweight contender; beat Ward via technical decision in January 2002)*: "If Gatti sticks to the game plan he used the first few rounds in the first fight, he might be able to outbox Micky and win a decision. But the whole thing about it is that Micky Ward forces you to fight his fight after a while because of his will. It's going to be a tough fight, but I think you have to give the mental edge to Ward because he's already dropped Gatti, and Gatti couldn't hurt him at all. He may win by a decision, he may win by a knockout, but I have to lean toward Ward."

ERIC BOTTJER *(matchmaker for Cedric Kushner Promotions)*: "It's a strange fight to pick because the first one was so brutal that you can't imagine the second one being the same way. You don't know which guy is going to have memories of the first fight and think, *Jeez, I don't want to go through that again!* One of them may decide to be a human being. But I don't know which guy would do that. Ward never has, and Gatti is the most exciting fighter I've ever seen. So in the end I think it's going to come down to strength, and I think Ward has an advantage. They both landed hard, clean, brutal shots, but Ward's punches affected Gatti more than Gatti's affected Ward. I really love both of these guys, but I'm picking Ward by decision."

DAN RAFAEL *(**USA Today** boxing writer)*: "The first fight was real close, but I thought Gatti won, and I can't see the rematch being a whole lot different. I just think that this time Gatti will get the nod, which will hopefully lead to one of the great trilogies in boxing."

ANTONIO DIAZ *(junior welterweight contender; beat Ward via 10-round decision in August 2000)*: "The first one was a great fight, but I think the second one will be like Barrera-Morales II—more boxing. They're going to watch the video of the first fight, and try to fix their mistakes. They'll try to use more skill this time, and that will benefit Gatti. But Micky Ward is a tough customer who keeps coming forward, and you can't box him all night. Gatti boxed well early the

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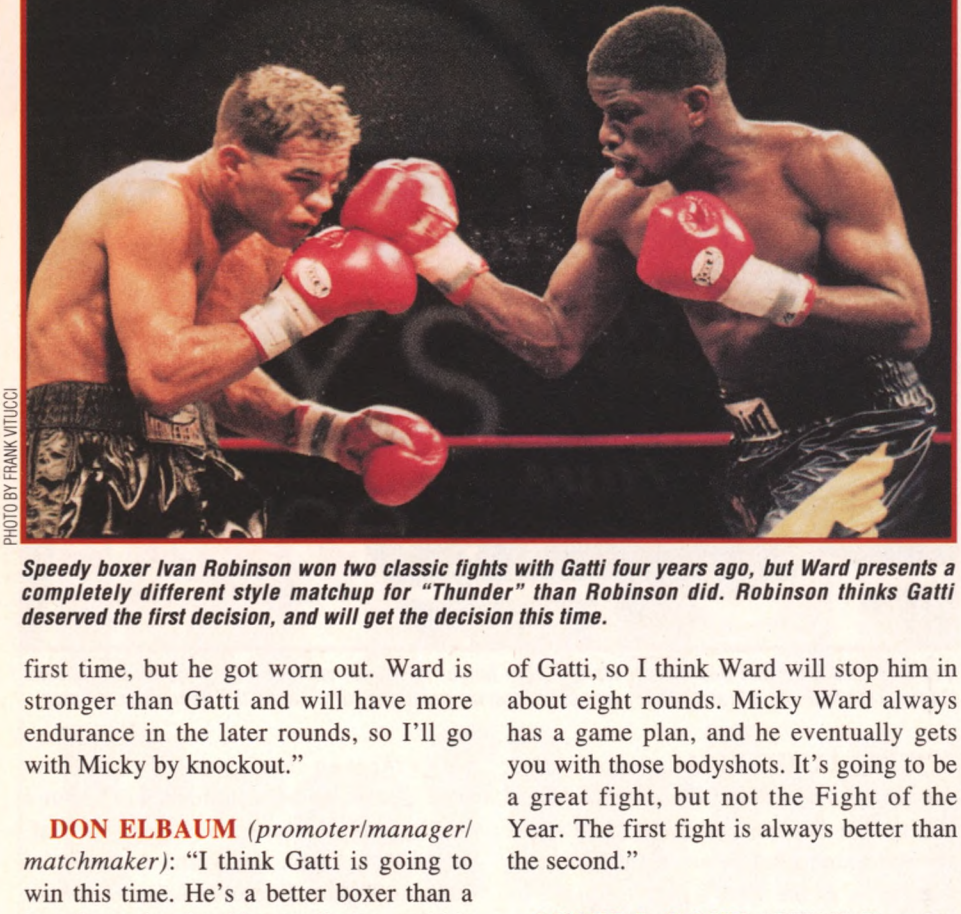
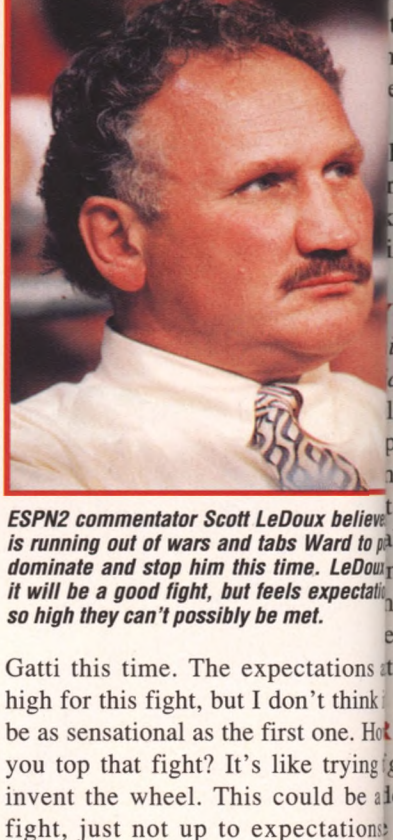


PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Speedy boxer Ivan Robinson won two classic fights with Gatti four years ago, but Ward presents a completely different style matchup for "Thunder" than Robinson did. Robinson thinks Gatti deserved the first decision, and will get the decision this time.



ESPN2 commentator Scott LeDoux believe is running out of wars and tabs Ward to p dominate and stop him this time. LeDou it will be a good fight, but feels expectati so high they can't possibly be met.

first time, but he got worn out. Ward is stronger than Gatti and will have more endurance in the later rounds, so I'll go with Micky by knockout."

DON ELBAUM *(promoter/manager/matchmaker)*: "I think Gatti is going to win this time. He's a better boxer than a lot of people give him credit for, and his skills are just a little better than Ward's. Unlike a lot of people, I don't think the first fight, which is one of the greatest I've ever seen, took everything out of them. I'm expecting another fantastic fight."

IVAN ROBINSON *(junior welterweight contender; twice beat Gatti via decision in 1998)*: "I like Gatti. In fact, even though Ward floored him with that big bodyshot, I thought Gatti still did enough to win the first fight. But to win, Gatti has to box the way he did against Tracy Patterson, and if he does brawl, he has to do it in the center of the ring. Ward is too dangerous on the ropes. A kayo wouldn't surprise me, but I'm picking Arturo by decision."

DeMARCUS "CHOP CHOP" CORLEY *(junior welterweight contender)*: "I think Ward's going to knock him out this time. Gatti may try to box more, but it's not going to take long for Ward to break him down. The first fight took a lot out of both guys, but it probably took more out of Gatti, so I think Ward will stop him in about eight rounds. Micky Ward always has a game plan, and he eventually gets you with those bodyshots. It's going to be a great fight, but not the Fight of the Year. The first fight is always better than the second."

SCOTT LeDOUX *(ESPN2 **Tuesday Night Fights** analyst)*: "I think Ward will win again, and he may even dominate Gatti this time. The expectations high for this fight, but I don't think be as sensational as the first one. Ho you top that fight? It's like trying invent the wheel. This could be a fight, just not up to expectations issue with Gatti is that he catches so punches, he makes me feel like really slick on defense. He may box, but he's not a boxer; he's a fi Calling him a boxer is like saying

Although Zab Judah is pals with Gatti, he picks Ward to win the rematch. Judah says Wa him the toughest fight of his career when they went at it for 12 rounds back in 1998.

LeDoux's going to dance for 10 rounds. Gatti is a warrior, but we only have so many wars in us. How many does Gatti have left? I think he's started to deteriorate a little, and he might just get stopped in this fight. There are no surprises for Ward. He knows what he's getting into, he knows what he has to do, and he'll win again."

YOEL JUDAH *(father/trainer of junior welterweight contender Zab Judah)*: "Gatti is going to take this one. He lost the first time, but he'll be in better shape, he's a little better boxer, and he'll come with the greater determination to beat Micky. This will be a lot more technical fight than the first one. This won't be no war where the two of them are standing there toe-to-toe like the first time. They'll think this time, and I think Gatti will have the edge with that."

RICKY HATTON *(junior welterweight contender)*: "This is a fight for pride. Sometimes you have two fighters like Micky Ward and Arturo Gatti, they can have five fights and they'd all be the same, because they fight for pride. This will be an absolute war again. They are both fantastic warriors, two superhuman fighters. If I had to put money down on this, I'd have to go with Arturo Gatti. Gatti, when he fought Terronn Millett, showed he has great boxing skills. And at times, he outboxed Micky the first time. It was just a matter of not keeping it up. This is a great fight that I really want to see."

CALVIN WATKINS *(Dallas Morning News boxing writer)*: "Last time I picked Gatti, and I'm going to pick him again. The first fight was so close, it could have gone either way. But rematches are usually more technical than the first fight, as we saw with Barrera and Morales, and in a technical fight, Gatti has the edge. If Gatti would have kept boxing a little longer in the first fight, he probably would have won, and I'm sure Buddy McGirt is yelling at him every day in training to box a few more rounds than he did the last time. This is one of those fights where either guy can win, but I see Gatti, who's practically fighting in his hometown this time, taking a close majority decision."

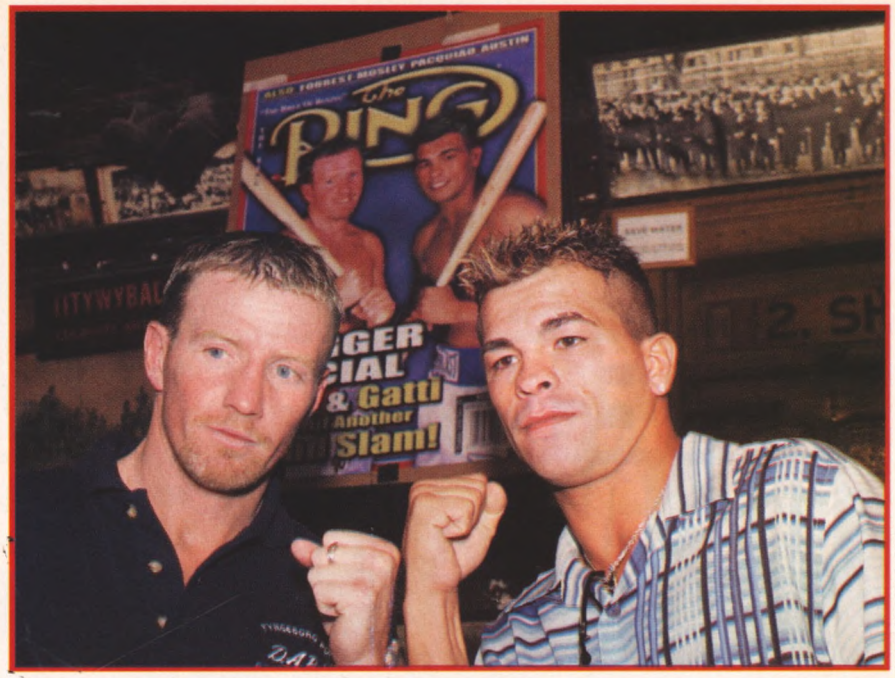


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

Ward and Gatti pose in front of the cover of the December 2002 issue of THE RING at the press conference to announce their second fight. Win or lose, both fighters have established themselves as first-rate attractions, and HBO is paying them accordingly.

TOMMY PARKS *(veteran trainer)*: "I have to go with Ward. I think he has more gusto left in his system. He seems to be able to sustain his combinations for longer stretches. I think, quite possibly, he'll stop Arturo this time. Arturo took much more punishment than Micky last time, and you can only take so much punishment in your career. The accumulation may overload the system when he fights Micky again. I could be wrong, maybe Arturo will last the distance, but either way, I think Micky wins. One thing's for sure: It will be another great fight. That's just the way these guys fight. It can't be any different."

DAVE BONTEMPO *(television broadcaster)*: "I think you'll see close to a carbon-copy of the first fight—another thrilling, pulsating fight fans' fight. The first time Gatti gets hit, he'll stop boxing and go back to what he knows best, slugging. The only time I've seen him box wire-to-wire was in the second Tracy Patterson fight. Ward will definitely make him brawl. Neither of these guys has ever been in a ho-hum fight, and this will look a lot like the first time. But with the fight being in Atlantic City, I believe Gatti may be able to find a couple of points he didn't get the first time and pull out a close decision win."

FREDDIE ROACH *(trainer/former junior featherweight contender)*: "This is one of those rematches where neither guy is going to change. They're going to fight the same way they did the first time, and it will possibly be another candidate for Fight of the Year. I'm definitely looking forward to this one, it's a great fight for boxing. Both guys are tough as nails. The first time was so close, but Micky pulled it out because he has a little more power. I think the power will be the difference again, and Micky will win another decision."

ZAB JUDAH *(junior welterweight contender; beat Ward via 12-round decision in June '98)*: "It's an interesting fight, and both of these guys are great fighters. Gatti can hurt Ward at any time. Ward can hurt Gatti at any time. If I had to pick a winner, I'd have to say Micky Ward, but not to take anything from Gatti. He is a great, great fighter and he has a major chance to win the fight. But Ward gave me my toughest fight, and that's something I won't forget. I was there for the first Ward-Gatti fight. This will be another war, and Ward will draw Gatti into that. He's known for drawing guys into big wars."

TOTALS: Ward 8, Gatti 7 ■

"OUT OF THAT DARK PLACE"...

THE RE-EDUCATION OF MICHAEL GRANT

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

By Ted Bodenrader

Michael Grant had it all.

One look and you could see that. This kid, all 6'7" of him, had the guns of a general and the legs of a legend. That abdomen could have been the work of a master bricklayer. His chest was more impressive than Anna Nicole's. And at the apex of it all, those shoulders seemed as if they designed specifically for carrying championship belts.

But what the world couldn't see on this flawless had nothing to do with anatomy and dimensions. couldn't see the doubts that lingered deep inside, the tainties that came from scant amateur experience and six years of organized prize fighting. Michael Grant

Grant pumps his long left jab into Robert Davis' face en route to his first significant win under trainer Teddy Atlas. The 6'7", 250-plus-pound Grant still has the physical tools to be a factor in the heavyweight division despite his disastrous results in 2000 and 2001.

the perfect machine he appeared to be. He was more like a piece of defective merchandise being errantly shipped out without being thoroughly checked out.

"That was two years ago," Grant recalled in August, a week removed from his third-round derailing of Robert Davis in Connecticut. "I shouldn't have been in that predicament in the first place. I thought I could handle it at the time, but once I got there, I found out quickly that I couldn't."

Grant's athletic prowess alone had allowed him to handle everything to that point. It was the same athletic prowess that had led him to become a baseball, basketball, and football star in high school and college. But this was different. When the bell rang, there would be no offensive line to crouch behind, no point guard to dish it off to.

And therein remained the problem. This time, Michael Grant had to rely solely on Michael Grant.

As he prepared to go eyeball to eyeball with Lennox Lewis that April 2000 night, this troubling reality began to shiver throughout his torso. Thousands of goose bumps cropped up through his skin to go with that big old knot in his throat.

"That moment in the locker room, it overwhelmed me," recalled Grant. "I had no identity at that moment. I needed an identity and a belief that what I could do and what I had worked on was going to help me in the fight."

Instead, as the fight neared, Grant bought in to all that fan and media gab about him being little more than an overhyped poster boy, a myth created by HBO to build a mountain of money for the network. He chose to believe in this single notion more than in all the grueling hours he worked arduously in the gym, all those slips, jabs, and hooks he perfected through then-trainer Don Turner, in preparing for this crucial moment.

"All that preparation you do, that's where it all shows its face is in that locker room, right before the moment of truth," explained Teddy Atlas, one of the game's true wizards. "All the work is done before then—much, much before then—but the way your fighter looks in that locker room tells the story of what has preceded it."

On the biggest night of his career, Grant was nothing more than a hostage of his own doubt. Lewis caught a whiff of that fear and knew his first defense of the undisputed heavyweight title was in the books before throwing a single punch. Six minutes later, Grant was laid out on the

PHOTO BY LARA STUART REBNEY

When Grant hurt Davis early in the third round, he pounced on him, knocked Davis down, and eventually forced the stoppage. That followed a second round in which Grant lost focus and received a well-deserved tongue-lashing from Atlas.

canvas like a corpse. Six months later, they were throwing dirt on his career.

That's where Atlas came in.

The hard-nosed trainer, brought on board to captain Team Grant after months of emotional hardships, knew that his role would be two-fold. Not only was Atlas the guy who would resurrect this fallen giant mentally, he would also need to serve as the master educator, the provider of all those hard lessons that evaded Grant during those crucial learning years.

But in their very first fight together, after surgery to repair a torn ACL from the Lewis fight, Grant would stumble once again. His instantaneous defeat at the left hand of Jameel McCline was like pulling the I.V. on his ailing career.

Not only was the first-round TKO defeat like a lethal injection to his comeback hopes, it also sent him straight back to the hospital. Grant sustained a broken ankle during a flash knockdown mere seconds into the fight, and endured surgery and six more months of rehab. During that time, the blanket of darkness covered him like an ugly cloud, and some were not sure if Grant would ever come out.

"That was a horrible thing for me," Grant admitted. "I felt like I was dead. I honestly thought about just ducking out the back door, about quitting boxing for good. I didn't think I could handle it no more. But on the other hand, I knew that was no way to go out."

It is now a year later, and the scars have healed, both the ones on his ankle and the ones in his aching heart.

Prior to the Davis fight, Grant's comeback consisted of a series of off-TV bouts against made-to- journeymen such as Reynaldo Minus (top) and Joe Lenhart (above). Sacrificing short-term fi gain, Atlas' plan helped restore Grant's deflated confidence.

In fact, a current four-fight winning streak has Grant standing on much sturdier legs. With Atlas carefully mapping out a wise and tactical comeback route, sending his protégé back into battle every six to eight weeks, the product he's pushed forth has shown a gradual progression with each passing test.

It wasn't, however, until the fourth official fight of this comeback trek, the three-round annihilation of Davis, a respected 27-4 (16) top-40 heavyweight from Ohio, that Atlas began to see the results of such tedious labor. He saw it well before Grant pasted Davis with a 20-punch barrage that separated the latter from his senses.

"Michael showed me a little bi in each fight," said Atlas, "but Davis fight, I saw something i locker room that I really liked. I guy who was ready to come o fight. I saw a guy who was re come out of that dark place tha been stuck in for a while."

When he did come out of the

room, Grant, 35-2 (26), began winging heavy right hands behind a long, poking jab, and displayed the kind of confidence that has been so woefully absent since the Lewis debacle. But in the second round, when Atlas saw his heavyweight slipping into a submissive pattern with the overmatched Davis, the fiery trainer was in his face like a telemarketer.

Two minutes later, around the time referee Michael Ortega stepped in to stop the fight, the light was once again beaming down upon Grant.

It was clearly the best Grant we'd seen since a 1999 cakewalk over Lou Savarese, when HBO was pumping him up as the heir apparent to Lewis' crown.

"I think Mike is doing the right thing by taking it slow," said Tommy Brooks, a renowned trainer and former Turner associate. "I thought he was in over his head in the Lewis fight. He was at least four or five fights away from being ready for that, but they rushed him along because of the money to be made. What he's doing now is smart. He's taking it slow and he's looking good."

Getting to this current junction allowed no shortcuts. When Grant's ankle had fully recuperated last winter, the time had come for him to walk again. Atlas set out to find new training headquarters, and zeroed in on the quaint settings of Elizabeth, New Jersey, a tranquil factory town and a vast departure from the busy Newark camp that preceded it.

"I found a little gym there that was perfect for what we wanted," said Atlas. "It's the kind of place you wouldn't know was there unless you knew it was there. We walk in every day and nobody's around to bother us, we got the whole place to ourselves. That's just what I wanted. I wanted to find a place where we would have no distractions, where we could concentrate on nothing but our work."

For Grant, this tiny sweatshop serves as the perfect academy in which to receive an education. When Atlas isn't working the mike for ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*, he can be found here, spewing all his fistic wisdom into a towering giant.

"I use an analogy all the time for it," said Grant. "When I was in kindergarten, I had a teacher who helped me get to grammar school. In grammar school, I had a teacher who helped me get to high school, and so on. Don Turner helped me get to a certain point, and now Teddy Atlas is teaching me to take it to the next level."

In March, Atlas began this process by feeding Grant easy tests. These stiffs, from the 16-10 Reynaldo Minus to the 9-11-1 Joe Lenhart, were dispatched in elementary fashion. They were merely lined up for Grant to inflate a battered confidence level.

But as the project continues to move along at a satisfactory pace, Grant is that much closer to pocketing a diploma. He's still a few tests shy, though, even after the impressive win over Davis.

"I'd say right now we're in college," said Atlas. "We're taking some college courses, and we're really coming along, but we haven't quite graduated yet. That's a ways off.

"For now, I want to just keep going along at this same pace, to learn a little more each time out," he added. "If you like what you see, and you can see the benefits of what you worked on in the gym, then you can step it up a little and go to the next phase. But you can't just jump right into Phase Two. You have to make sure you've completed Phase One first; otherwise, you'll lose him.

"It's going to take some time; this is not something that will happen overnight. It takes time to develop the three aspects of this game, and that's what we're doing with Michael. We're trying to get the physical aspect in order, as well as the mental and the emotional."

For Atlas, this is the second attempt to meld these three elements into a heavyweight conqueror. His other heavyweight Michael—Michael Moorer—was certainly no small order, despite a pair of championship runs.

"That's why I think Teddy is the right man for the job," Brooks added. "Most of Mike's problems are psychological. After the Lewis fight, he lost faith in his abilities. So what he needs is to go back and learn the basic fundamentals and get the momentum going again. Then the mental part will come."

(Continued on page 72)

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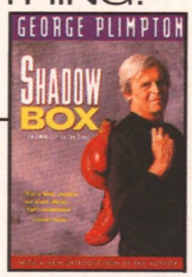

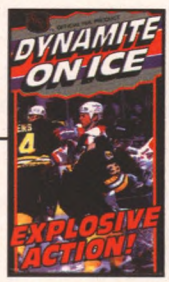

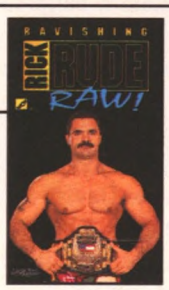

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Michael Grant

(Continued from page 71)

But even Atlas himself is uns what grades he'll ultimately scor the perplexing Grant.

"You may think you're doi right things," said Atlas, "but th no definites in this game. You ca quite know for sure. The only thi know for sure is that we're in a better place than we were seven ago. That was an awfully dark pl came from."

Despite the broken ankle bo drove Grant to such a dismal Atlas has been helping his new weight fortify a new bone, o Grant has never needed before otherwise unruffled career. By ing a sturdy backbone, a foun upon which to build genuine dence, Atlas hopes to soon unlea protégé back into the world of bi championship boxing.

Yet Atlas won't truly know hi is complete until he sees Grant, n in that locker room moments bef next championship bid. He won' if all these afternoon sweat se have aptly prepared him for that tive moment of truth.

"You never know for sure i you're doing will pay off," said "You hope it will, but you don' until that big moment comes."

And when it does come, Atlas be looking at what everyone else an eye-popping spectacle from h toe. Instead, he'll be looking rig Grant's eyes, looking closely to this giant has finally found hims identity.

"That's where you show yo self: in that locker room," said "Just as that big moment is appro That's where you see if you did thing you were supposed to dur those months leading up to it."

And when you don't have that bone to support you or that ri belief running deep within yo locker room can be the darke loneliest place on this Earth.

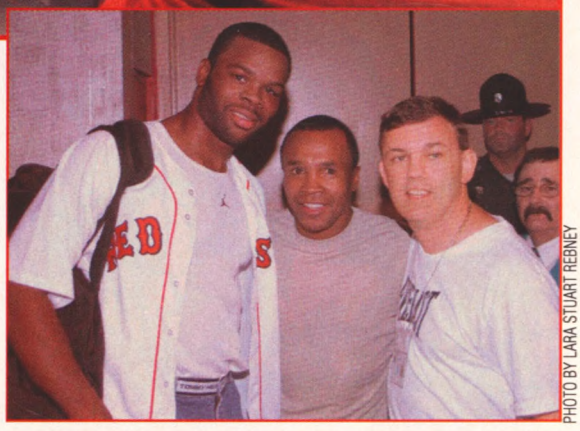

PHOTO BY LARA STUART REDNEY

What a difference a year makes: In July '01, Grant wore a face of agony when he broke his ankle against Jameel McCline (above); in August '02, Grant, Atlas, and promoter Ray Leonard were all smiles following the emphatic win over Davis (right).

"It was like my own personal hell," Grant said of the minutes leading up to the Lewis debacle. "I felt like I was dying. I felt like I was all alone and there was nobody around to help me."

The next time Michael Grant needs backbone in such a situation, he'll need to know that somebody is there to provide it. It's the only somebody he can truly rely on to lead him through such a cruel and vicious game.

He'll need to rely on Michael Grant. ■

Ted Bodenrader is a freelance writer based in Boston, Massachusetts, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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IT AIN'T OVER TILL IT'S OVER... TWICE!

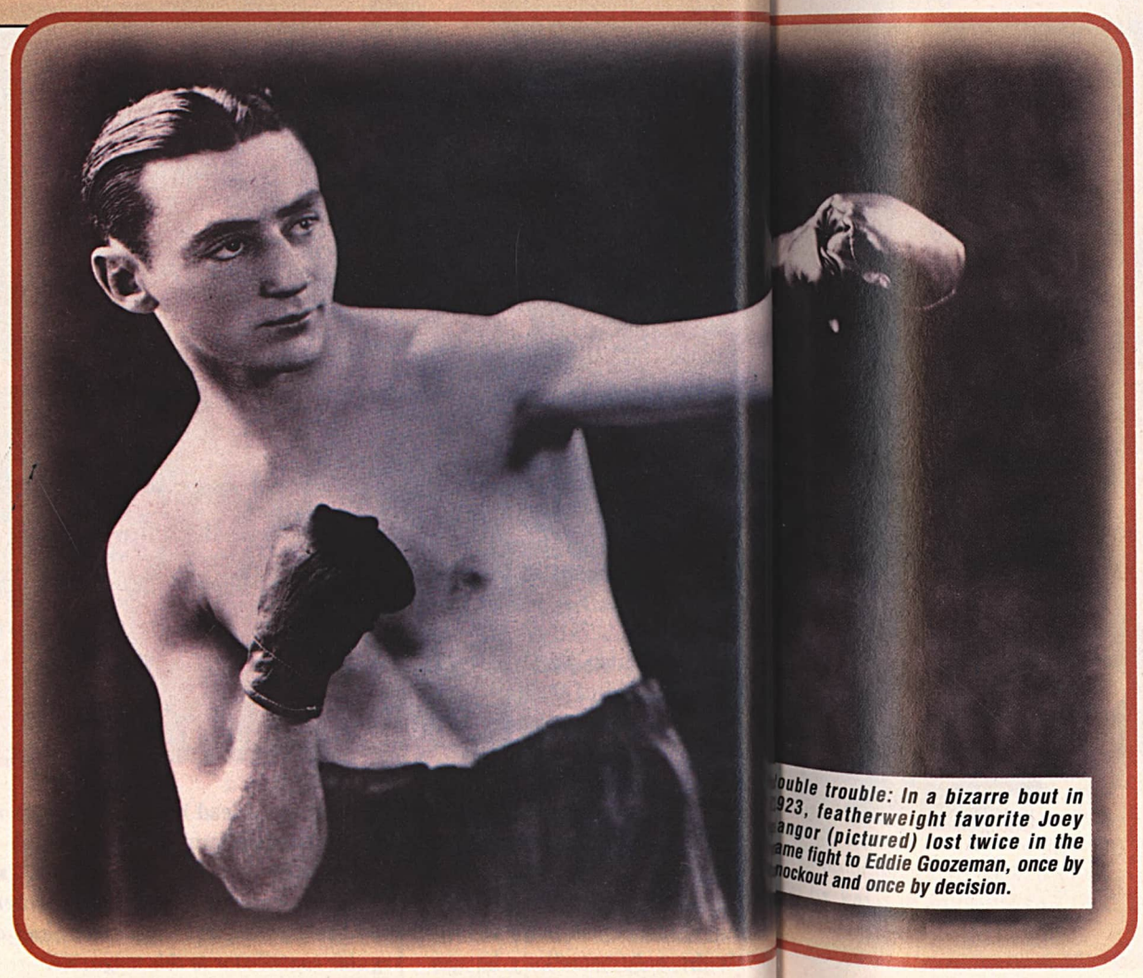
By Pete Ehrmann

When the National Football League announced before the kickoff of the 2002 season that the instant replay would be brought back for another year, it was hailed by fans and commentators as an enlightened measure against the recurring problem of botched or questionable calls. Instant replay, for those who don't follow football, is what occurs when the coach of one of the competing teams objects to a referee's ruling on a play and makes an appeal for a review of it. Then the head referee goes over to the sidelines and watches a replay of the action on a television monitor, and decides to either affirm the call or reverse it.

The messy ending of the Zab Judah-Kostya Tszyu 140-pound title unification match in 2001 had some fight fans calling for the equivalent of instant replay in the case of a fight that is stopped prematurely, controversially, or, in the view of one of the combatants or the paying customers, flat-out wrongly.

But ring history offers an even easier solution: Start the damned thing over again!

Granted, it has never happened in a world championship fight, but there are

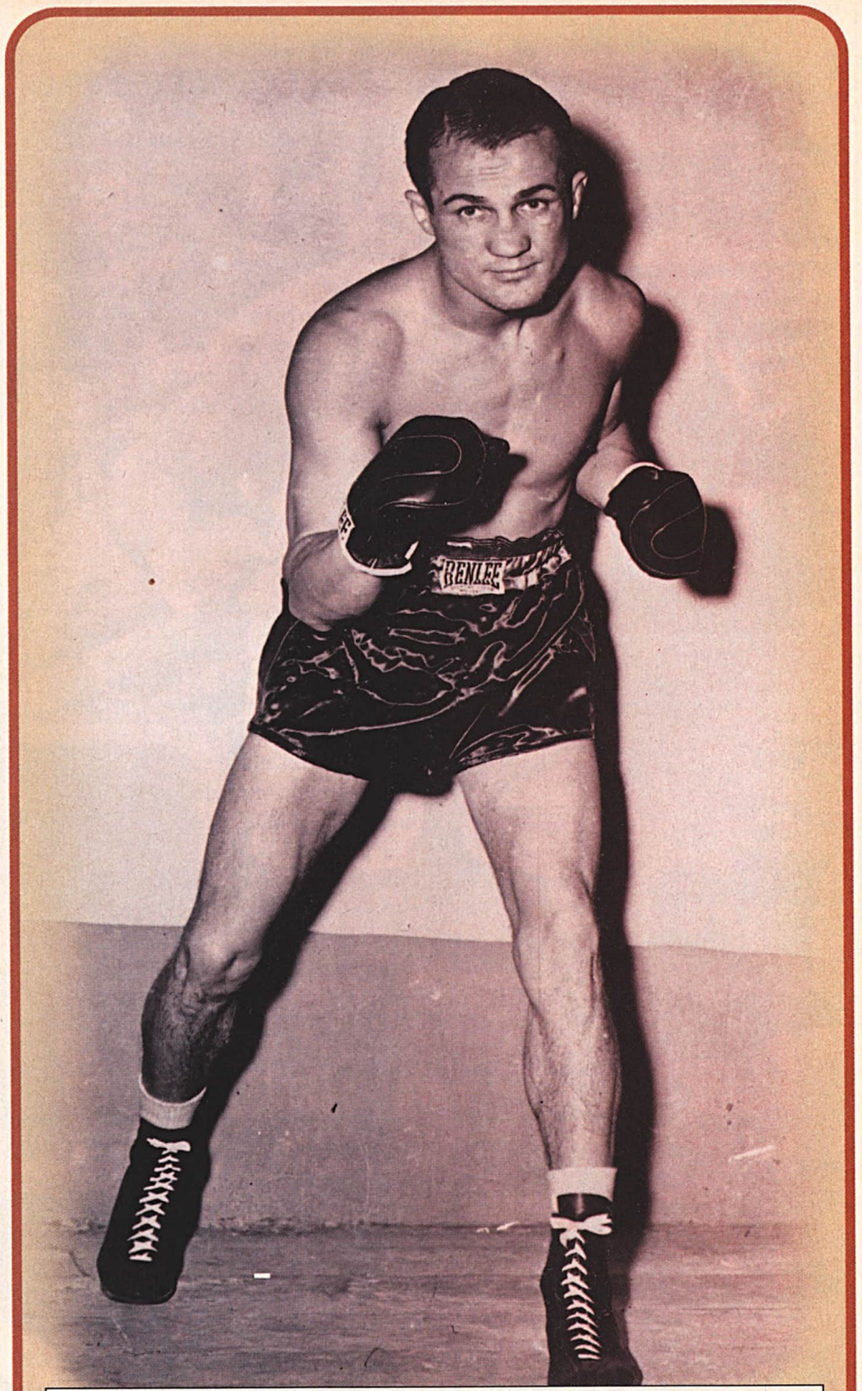


Double trouble: In a bizarre bout in 1923, featherweight favorite Joey Sangor (pictured) lost twice in the same fight to Eddie Goozeman, once by knockout and once by decision.

other precedents for rewinding back to the opening bell, or at least picking up where the fight left off, when the subjective judgment of or an error by a referee results in a stoppage protested by a principle or questioned by other on-site officials.

It happened at least three times alone in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where, perhaps thanks to a fondness for the foamy beverage that put the city on the map, people tend to start things over a lot.

Featherweight Joey Sangor was a local idol in the 1920s, and a top contender for the featherweight championship. When he faced bitter rival Ernie Goozeman at the Arena Ice Garden on April 20, 1923, the visitor tore right into Sangor and caught him with a short but mighty left hook that dropped him in the middle of the ring. Joey appeared unhurt, but after starting to rise, he suddenly went back down on one knee. Referee Walter Houlehen correctly continued the count he had begun when Sangor first touched the canvas, and upon



When opponent Johnny "Scrap Iron" Roszina claimed he didn't hear the count after being knocked out in the first round of a 1943 fight with Fritzie Zivic (pictured), a boxing commissioner asked Zivic to start over. Zivic obliged and knocked Roszina out again in the ninth.

reaching 10, he helped the still-kneeling Sangor to his feet and informed him that he had been knocked out.

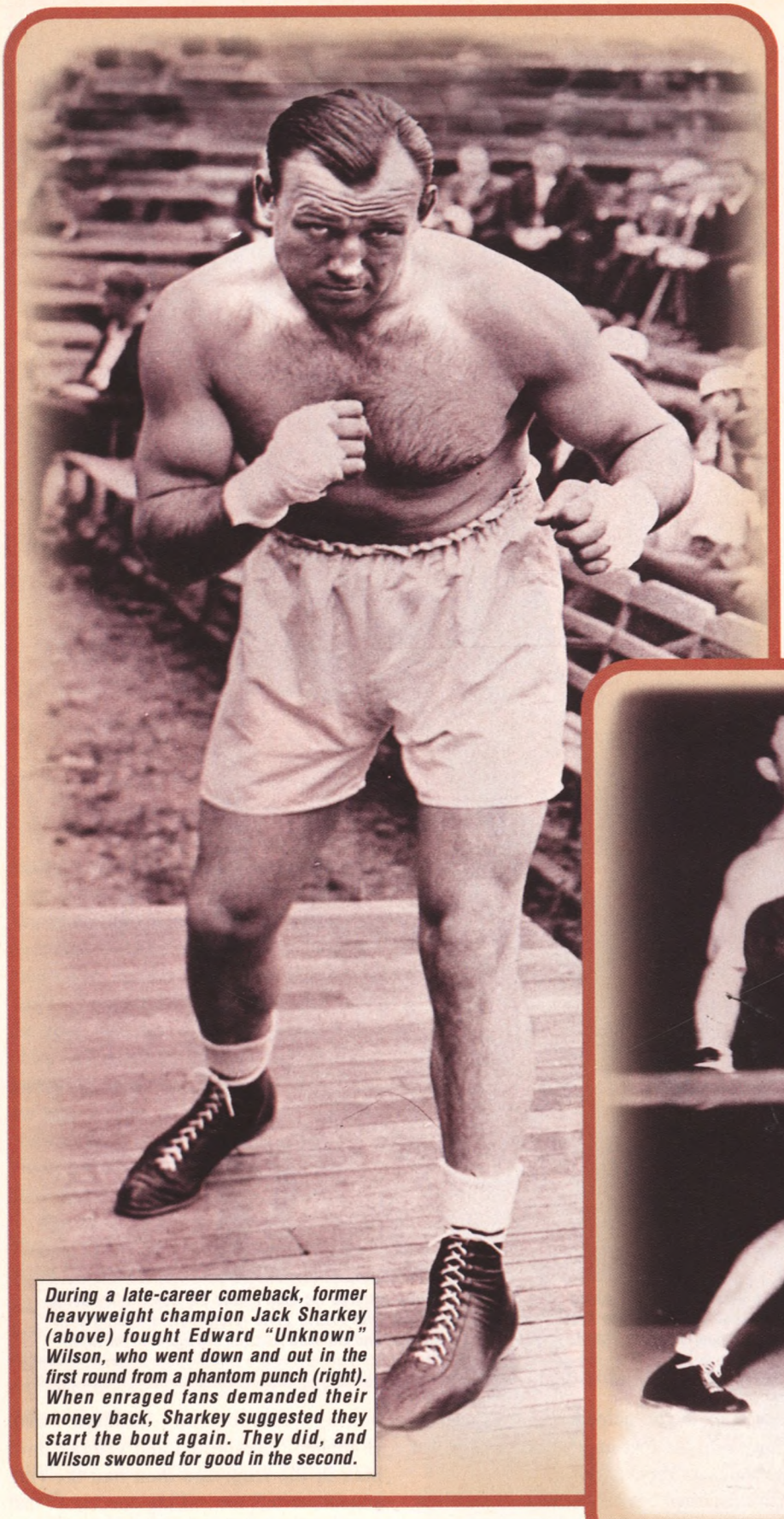
The crowd began booing and catcalling, and Goozeman headed for the safety of his dressing room. Members of the Wisconsin boxing commission huddled with Houlehen, a respected and veteran third man in the ring, and then had the ring announcer tell the milling spectators that "although the referee was correct in his ruling, it has been decided that for the good of

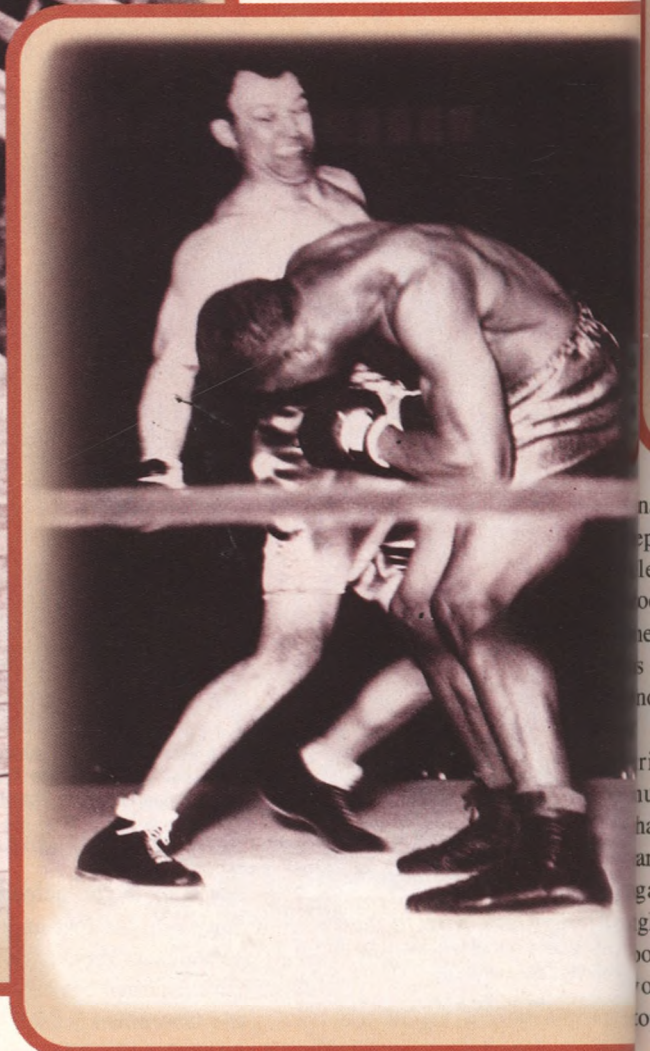
boxing, the bout will be continued."

It took a half-hour for the incred Goozeman to be persuaded that und circumstances getting back into th would actually be more for his own than boxing's, but finally he agreed gloves were rounded up and the fe went at it again from the second op bell. The resentful Goozeman Sangor pay for his overtime, pou him mercilessly for 10 rounds newspaper decision.

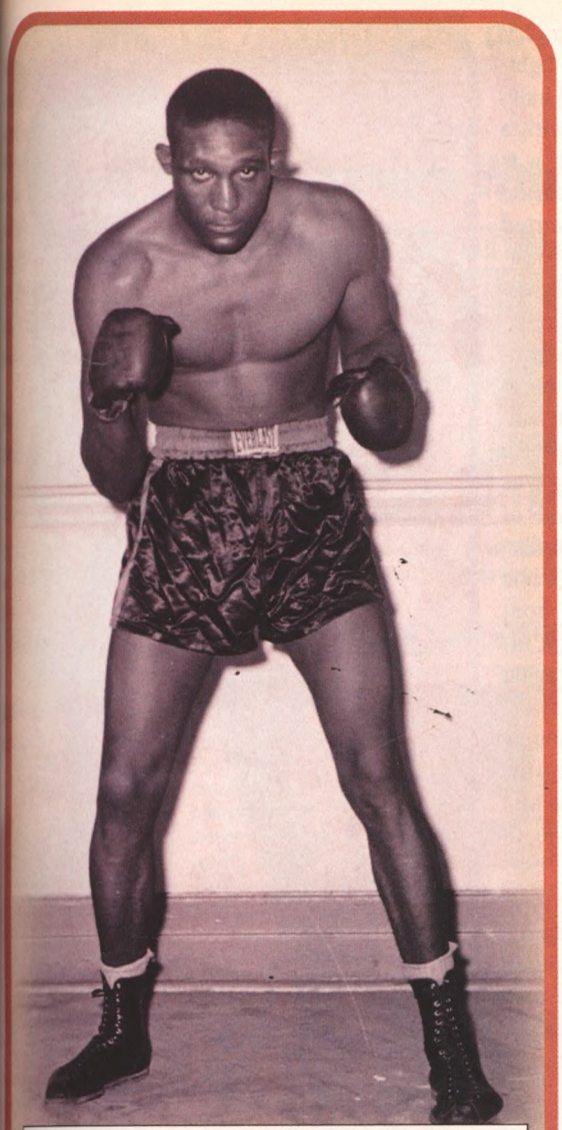
Almost exactly 20 years later, on 30, 1943, former welterweight cha Fritzie Zivic met local hero Jo "Scrap Iron" Roszina in a schedule rounder at the Milwaukee Audito Roszina went down from a Zivic on combination within two minutes opening bell, and was counted out b eree Ted Jamieson.

Upon arising, Johnny began sto around and protesting that he had





During a late-career comeback, former heavyweight champion Jack Sharkey (above) fought Edward "Unknown" Wilson, who went down and out in the first round from a phantom punch (right). When enraged fans demanded their money back, Sharkey suggested they start the bout again. They did, and Wilson swooned for good in the second.



Although Marty Marshall is best known for being the first to beat Sonny Liston, he's also on the list of fighters who had to beat his man twice in the same fight to get an official victory.

unable to hear the count (although ringside reporters had followed it without any trouble), and the crowd got behind him so vociferously that Fred Saddy, secretary of the boxing commission, sidled up to Zivic as the latter was preparing to exit the ring, and whispered in his ear.

"Anything you say, Fred," replied Fritzie, who'd barely loosened up his thumbs, anyway. The agreeable former champ, who'd been asked to sweat a little harder for his night's pay, took off his robe again and went back to work when the fight was started again from scratch. If you look it up in the record book, it says Zivic won by kayo in nine. But in fact, he stopped Roszina twice that night.

Four years later, on December 2, 1947, welterweight contender George "Sugar" Costner of Cincinnati was at the same Auditorium with the same referee for a 10-round main event against Jackie Cooper. Costner floored Cooper for the count in the first round, but then Cooper strenuously argued that Jamieson had neglected to direct Costner to a neutral corner during the count. As obliging as Zivic, Costner agreed to pretend the whole thing hadn't happened, and the second time around put Cooper out in round three.

Poor Jamieson. Once a quality fighter himself who didn't ask for a re-do when he maybe should have against Harry Greb in 1920 (he knocked down Greb, but the tongue-tied referee didn't start counting until at least four seconds had elapsed, and Greb got up at seven to win the bout), Jamieson finally hung up his bow tie for good in the early-1950s. That was after Milwaukee fans jeered him out of the ring for stopping a fight between 191-pound Dan Bucceroni and 174-pound Wesbury Bascom in the seventh round because Bascom was eating some heavy leather. There was no re-start this time, but Jamieson, a referee for 28 years, voluntarily turned in his license.

"Fans seem to want a boy practically murdered," he said, "but I want no part of that—never did, in fact. It's been my policy to stay on the safe side. If I had let it go until the eighth or ninth, and then something had happened, everybody would be saying, 'Why didn't he stop it earlier?' I did it and I'm glad. I'd do it again because I don't go for legal murder."

Starting fights over again has also happened in places where beer isn't considered holy water. It happened on November

(Continued on page 78)

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Starting Over

(Continued from page 77)

22, 1935, in a Boston match between former heavyweight champion Jack Sharkey and a rugged journeyman named Edward "Unknown" Winston.

Sharkey, embarking on a ring comeback a year after losing his title to Primo Carnera, put Winston down for the count twice in two rounds before 12,000 hometown fans who, according to ringside reporter John Lardner, were in danger of getting soaked if not actually drowned by the tank job.

In the first round, wrote Lardner, Winston "went down under an off-center left hook and an invisible right to the body. He writhed and groaned on the canvas till the referee counted him out." Then, as shouts of "Give us our money back!" resounded throughout the arena, the referee and the state boxing commission officers put their heads together. It was apparently Sharkey himself who finally suggested that he and Winston start all over again. The latter was agreeable, and round one commenced all over again.

"The boys came out snarling," wrote Lardner, "and Mr. Winston, determined to earn his night's pay before going home, lasted one full round without losing his balance. In the second round, though, he was poised on the edge of the tank again. Before you could say 'Man overboard!' Mr. Sharkey threw another invisible punch, and 'Unknown' was down for a count of nine. He got up and went down again, this time executing a beautiful jackknife dive with a three-quarter twist. He stayed under water for all of 10 seconds."

Accommodating grumbling fans was fine up to a point, but the former heavyweight champion wasn't going to make a career out of it and out of fighting Unknown Winston over and over again. His night's labors were over, Sharkey announced. "I fought a hard three rounds," he said. "How many times do I have to knock a guy out?"

When lightweight champion Bob Montgomery and former featherweight titlist Petey Scalzo boxed in Philadelphia on October 25, 1943, one of the undercard bouts was between Donnie Maes and Ellis Phillips. Maes was stopped at 1:35 of the first round, and both fighters exited the ring. But a half-hour later, they returned with a different referee, and it was announced without explanation that the fight would be started over. Too bad for Maes, who lasted only a minute longer the second time around.

Marty Marshall is best remembered for being the first man to defeat future heavyweight champion Sonny Liston, but before he pulled that off, Marshall was involved in a flagrant case of *pugilistica interruptus* in Columbus, Ohio. In the third round of his January 5, 1954, bout against Herbie Moore of Cincinnati, the Detroit boxer caught Moore with a left hook near the closing bell. The official counting for the knockdowns at ringside stopped at eight, but referee Mut Schartz kept right on going to 10 and raised Marshall's hand.

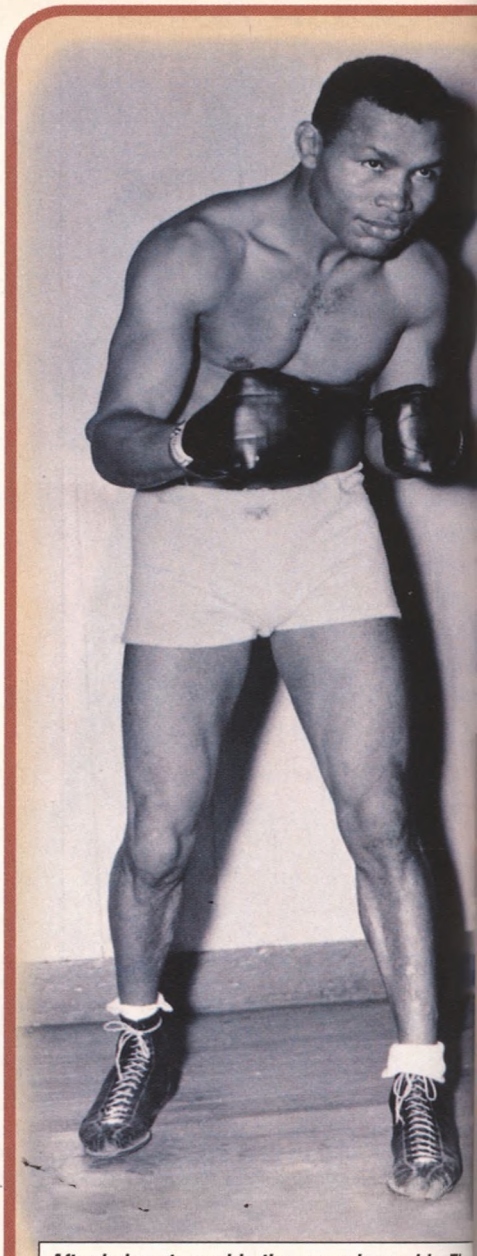
The crowd vented its displeasure as Marshall hustled to his dressing room, and the skittish boxing commissioners overruled Schartz and ordered Marshall back in the ring to resume the right in round four.

Marshall refused, so the commissioners declared Moore the winner. When that didn't bring Marshall back out, they announced that he would be fined and suspended for a year. That did the trick, and, after waiting for a four-round preliminary match that had started in the interim to conclude, Marshall outboxed Moore for seven additional rounds for a decision win.

At the very least, referee Jay Nady, who was verbally abused and physically harassed by Judah after he stopped the junior welterweight title fight in favor of Tszyu, might have tried what got a referee named Al Ablett off a similar hook 55 years earlier in Salt Lake City. When Ablett stopped a main event between heavyweights Tiger Jack Fox and Windmill Pearce in the third round after Pearce had been down twice, the disgruntled defeated warrior got up and st punching Ablett as Fox sprinted t dressing room.

Inflamed customers rushed the rin demanded that the fight resume. But doused that idea for good by pointin that Pearce "slugged me five time didn't hurt me any. So how the hell going to hurt the Tiger?!"

Pete Ehrmann is a freelance w based in West Allis, Wisconsin, and ular contributor to this magazine.



After being stopped in the second round by Tige Jack Fox (pictured), Windmill Pearce insiste the referee restart the bout. When the re refused, Pearce attacked him, but was st feather-fisted he made little impression.

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Julius Francis KO 7 Steffen Nielsen
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Faruq Saleem KO 3 Craig Tomlinson
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Jean-Francois Bergeron KO 4 Mario Cawley
Zuri Lawrence W 8 Paolo Vidoz
Calvin Brock KO 2 Leroy Humphries

CRUISERWEIGHTS

James Toney KO 7 Jason Robinson
Virgil Hill KO 1 Carlos Bates
Jorge Castro KO 8 Sergio Baez
Ravea Springs W 10 Kelvin Davis
Arthur Williams KO 1 Don Normand
Pietro Aurino W 10 Paolo Ferrara
Carlos Cruzat W 12 Tipton Walker
Valery Brudov KO 3 Igor Pilipenko

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Roy Jones KO 6 Clinton Woods
(Retains World Title)
Dariusz Michalczewski KO 10 Richard
Joey DeGrandis W 10 Dan Sheehan
Peter Oboh KO 1 George Adipo
Orlando Rivera KO 9 Danny Santiago
Kabary Salem W 6 Lloyd Bryan
Adrian Diaconu W 6 Ken Bowman

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Sven Ottke KO 9 Joe Gatti
(Retains IBF Title)
Eric Lucas W 12 Omar Sheika
(Retains WBC Title)
Joe Calzaghe W 12 Miguel Jimenez
Markus Beyer KO 4 Ron Martinez
Anthony Mundine KO 3 Soon Botes
Jermain Taylor W 10 Sam Hill
Rick Thornberry W 12 Ramon Britez
Fighting Nordin KO 1 Jairo Siris
Mario Veit KO 1 Juraj Ondricko
Manu Ntoh KO 2 Roosevelt Walker
Jose Spearman W 8 John Spell
Levan Easley KO 2 John Vargas
Alain Bonnamie KO 7 Alex Hilton
Quinton Smith KO 3 Roland Cumming
Tarvis Simms W 6 Derrick Whitley

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Junior welter prospect Paul Malignaggi hammers Anthony Simpkins

Jeff Lacy KO 1 Jason Collins
Laila Ali KO 2 Suzy Taylor

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Shibata Flores KO 3 Maurice Brantley
Bert Schenk KO 3 Alban Girouard
Tony Ayala KO 5 Lee Fortune
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Andras Galfi W 12 Anthony Van Niekerk
Ian MacLeod W 12 Nick Lundh
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Sam Garr KO 10 Norberto Sandoval
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Luis Collazo W 6 Vincent Harris
Yuri Foreman W 4 Jose Luis Almanzar
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Gianluca Branco W 6 Massimo Bertozzi
Ted Bami KO 6 Bradley Price
Omar Davila W 8 Mike Davis
Paul Malignaggi KO 1 Anthony Simpkins

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Artur Grigorian W 12 Stefano Zoff
Steve Forbes W 12 David Santos
Julio Diaz W 10 James Crayton
Orlando Salido W 10 Carlos Gerena
Roque Cassiani W 10 Justo Sencion
Billy Irwin KO 7 Mario Lechowski
Edelmiro Martinez KO 5 Daniel Jimenez
Lemuel Nelson KO 7 Johnny West
Prawet Singwangcha KO 2
Ahmad Abbybastnov
David Burke KO 10 Gary Hibbert
Juan Diaz W 10 Peter Nieves
Darling Jimenez Tech. Win 4 Nelson Medina
Marshall Martinez D 6 Luis Arceo

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Sirimongkol Singmanassak KO 2
Kengo Nagashima
(Wins Vacant WBC Title)
Phillip Ndou KO 4 Andrey Devyataykin
Julio Pablo Chacon W 10 Victor Hugo Paz
Jorge Barrios KO 11 Javier Alvarez
Nate Campbell KO 3 Daniel Alicea
Kevin Lear KO 7 Kirkor Kirkorov
Junior Jones W 10 Johnny Walker
Randy Suico KO 4 Juan Garcia
Joe Morales W 8 Carlos Diaz
Mike Anchondo W 10 Ever Beleno
Nobuhito Honmo W 10 Kinji Amano
Gavin Rees KO 1 Sergey Andreychikov
Alex Arthur KO 1 Pavel Potopko
Isra Girgrah W 10 Michelle Nielsen

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Derrick Gainer Tech. Draw 2 Daniel Seda
(Retains WBA Title)
William Abelyan KO 10 Orlando Soto
Wayne McCullough KO 4 Johannes Maisa
Bobby Boy Velardez W 10 Edel Ruiz
Takalani Ndlovu W 12 Solomzi Govuza
Eiichi Sugama W 10 Naoto Fujiwara
Setsuo Segawa KO 4
Dejdamron Por Muangsurin
Rocky Juarez KO 6 Ivan Alvarez

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Oscar Larios KO 8 Manabu Fukushima
Joan Guzman KO 3 Fabio Oliva
Nadel Hussein KO 5 Budi Wizon
Napapol Kiattisakchokchai KO 1
Ramil Sebuco
Frankie Archuleta Tech. Win 5
Arturo Valenzuela
Wethya Sakmuangklang W 10
Vichit Chuwatana
Somsak Sithchatchawal KO 5 Abram Lubisi
Jose Aguiniga W 8 Julian Rodriguez

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Veerapol Sahaprom KO 3 Daven Bermudez
(Non-Title Bout)
Heriberto Ruiz KO 3 Jose Sarabia
Saohin Sithchai Condo KO 1 Antony Gimeyo
Spend Abazi KO 7 Giovanni Andrade
Jhonny Gonzalez KO 2 Ruben Lopez
Steve Dotse W 8 Cal Shepard
Vernie Torres W 6 Julio Cesar Oyuela
Plinio Gonzalez W 6 Carlos Murillo
Daniel Ponce De Leon KO 3
Idelfonso Martinez
Brahim Asloum KO 4 Wele Maqolo

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Masamori Tokuyama KO 6 Erik Lopez
(Retains WBC Title)
Gerry Penalosa KO 7 Seiji Tanaka
Gerson Guerrero KO 3 Francisco Paredes
Medgoen Singsurat W 8 Georgio Ipoc
Sornpichai Kratingdaenggym W 6
Nasario Manogas
Jose Carita Lopez KO 3 Alberto Ontiveros
Tomas Rojas KO 6 Javier Torres
Pramuansak Phosuwan KO 8
Falanzona Fidal
Jose Navarro KO 2 Javier Cintron

FLYWEIGHTS

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam W 12
Jesus Martinez
(Retains WBC Title)
Mzukisi Sikali W 12 Hawk Makepula
Omar Narvaez W Disq. 10 Luis Lazarte
Paulino Villalobos W 10 Gilberto Keb-Baas
Brian Viloria W 12 Javier Lagos
Wandee Chor Charoen W 6 Dario Olarte
Ncedo Cecane W 12 Nkqubela Gwazela
Trash Nakanuma KO 6 Ryo Kitano
Andrea Sarritzu W 12 Andrei Kostyn
Noriyuki Komatsu W 12 Jungoh Song

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Nelson Dieppa Tech. Draw 2 Jhon Molina
Fahlan Sakkreerin W 12 Mun Jong Min
Eagle Okuda W 10 Noel Tunacao
Sarikalek Ekarin W 10 Rey Orais
Juanito Rubillar KO 3 Takayuki Korogi
Juan Alfonso Keb W 10 Francisco Rosas
Phatutshedzo Nemukongwe KO 1
Mbulelo Nyanda

STRAWWEIGHTS

Chana Porpaoin W 6 Wendell Cajules
Hiroyuki Abe Tech. Win 6 Makoto Suzuki

BOXING EQUIPMENT
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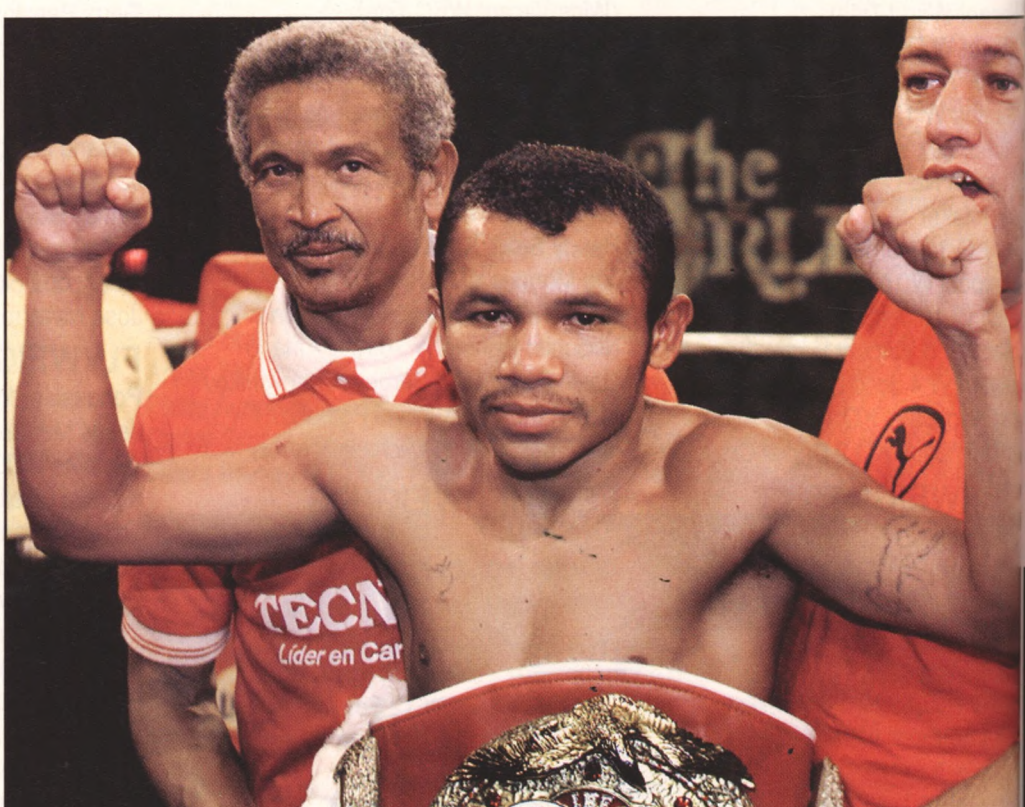
PRESENTS

The RING

FIGHTER of the MONTH



We've seen plenty of cut-eye technical draws recently, and usually one or both fighters have looks on their faces afterward like it's the end of the world. Well, it's not. Miguel Barrera is the latest living proof of that.

Barrera was just another anonymous little Colombian fighter when he challenged Roberto Leyva for the IBF mini flyweight title in September 2001, but after dropping Leyva in round two, he looked on his way to making a name for himself. That is, until a clash of heads in the following round left Leyva with a badly cut left eye and sent Barrera home without the belt.

But Barrera regrouped, waited patiently for 11 long months for his second shot, and dished out a thorough beating in an excellent fight to capture the title and make an impression on the boxing public. The new titlist aggressively worked his way inside, ruled the ring with constant pressure, and let both fists go with technically sound fury—kind of like the way another guy named Barrera used to fight.

At least one Barrera still knows what the fans want to see, and he beat a previously undefeated titleholder in a memorable battle to become the Fighter of the Month. A cut may have delayed his rise a few months, but when he got a second chance, Barrera proved he's a cut above.

Miguel Barrera

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Acelino Freitas W 12 Daniel Attah

Phoenix, Arizona: Freitas brought an enthusiastic swarm of flag waving Brazilian fans to the desert. They danced a happy samba all night, but for most of the crowd, estimated at around 2,500, it was more siesta than fiesta. Freitas, 32-0 (29), demonstrated that his overall technique has improved, but there was little fire in the performance. The holder of the WBO junior lightweight title, as well as the WBA "super" title, took his third decision in a row after igniting his career with 29 straight knockouts.

Attah, 20-1-1 (13) with 1 no-contest, a Nigerian transplant now based in Washington, D.C., seems like a humble, hard-working fellow, but he should have been less reserved and more productive. The fans were patient through about 30 seconds of introductory feints, then started booing when the contestants failed to engage.

It was soon obvious Freitas, 130, had both superior speed and power. He scored with a couple of hard shots, but Attah, 130, picked off most of them with a straight-armed defense. Some of Freitas' bodywork landed well below the belt line. He was warned immediately by referee Bobby Ferrara (USA). Attah often lunged in head first, as Freitas' team warned about prior to the bout. Freitas remained unruffled as his corner screamed.

Freitas, 26, showed improved defense, maybe since few shots were thrown at him. It took the 23-year-old Attah quite a while to land a solid punch. When a good right counter spun Freitas around, it was almost as if by accident. Freitas looked unconcerned, and soon the crowd was too. "Popo" smiled during exchanges, and when Attah slipped out of the ring, Freitas helped him back in. Midway through the sixth frame, the arena went dark from electric failure. Maybe higher powers had seen enough. Unfortunately, the blackout lasted less than a minute.

It appeared Attah planned on waiting for the late rounds before making a move. He gave Freitas a bloody nose, but the challenger showed signs of deep distress in the 10th, a session in which Freitas lost a point for an unintentional butt. Both fighters spent most of the last rounds looking to Ferrara for intervention.

Attah finally put some punches together, but it was way too little too late, for the audience or the judges. Freitas never solved Attah's southpaw style; he wore Attah down without wearing him out. Freitas clowned as the contest ended, only to hear a cascade of jeers. Afterward, Freitas took a microphone and led his supporters in a Brazilian anthem. Action wise, that was the highlight of the show.

All three judges—Raul Caiz (USA), Guy Jutras (Canada), and Chris Wilson (USA)—scored it 117-110. Freitas' promoter, Art Pelullo, envisions an optional defense for his charge later this fall, then another unification match early next year. Since the IBF belt is currently vacant and the WBC belt is held by relatively obscure Thailander Sirimongkol Singmanassuk, a rematch with Joel Casamayor, rated first by both the WBA and the WBO, seems a more likely option.

"I did what I wanted and that's go 12 full rounds," said Freitas. "I trained for two months to get ready. I was very worried about headbutts, but he's not a dirty fighter like Casamayor. I want to unify the division, then go after Floyd Mayweather if he doesn't move up in weight. I'm ready for anybody."

Television: Showtime
Promoter: Banner Promotions
(8-3-02)
Phil Woolever

Antwun Echols KO 3 Richard Grant

Phoenix, Arizona: By taking on the overmatched Grant in the first Showtime-televised fight of the evening, Echols became the first marquee fighter to grace the sparkling new Dodge Theatre, a downtown venue with plans to return big-time boxing to Arizona on a regular basis. The attendance for this show didn't make it to the break-even mark, but Echols did his part to inspire the crowd with dramatic action, and made it sound like a packed house.

Echols, 167, St. Petersburg, Florida, entered with live, personalized rappers. He had been in the spotlight before, against bigger guns, and it clearly showed. Grant, 167, Brooklyn, New York, by way of Jamaica, is best known as the victim of a televised cheap shot from James Butler. Grant, 28, showed up with flaming orange hair to match his trunks. He was a classic case of style over substance.

Grant charged out with an overhand right. It didn't bother Echols, 29, but showed Grant had definitely arrived

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Cautious Freitas picks apart challenger Attah

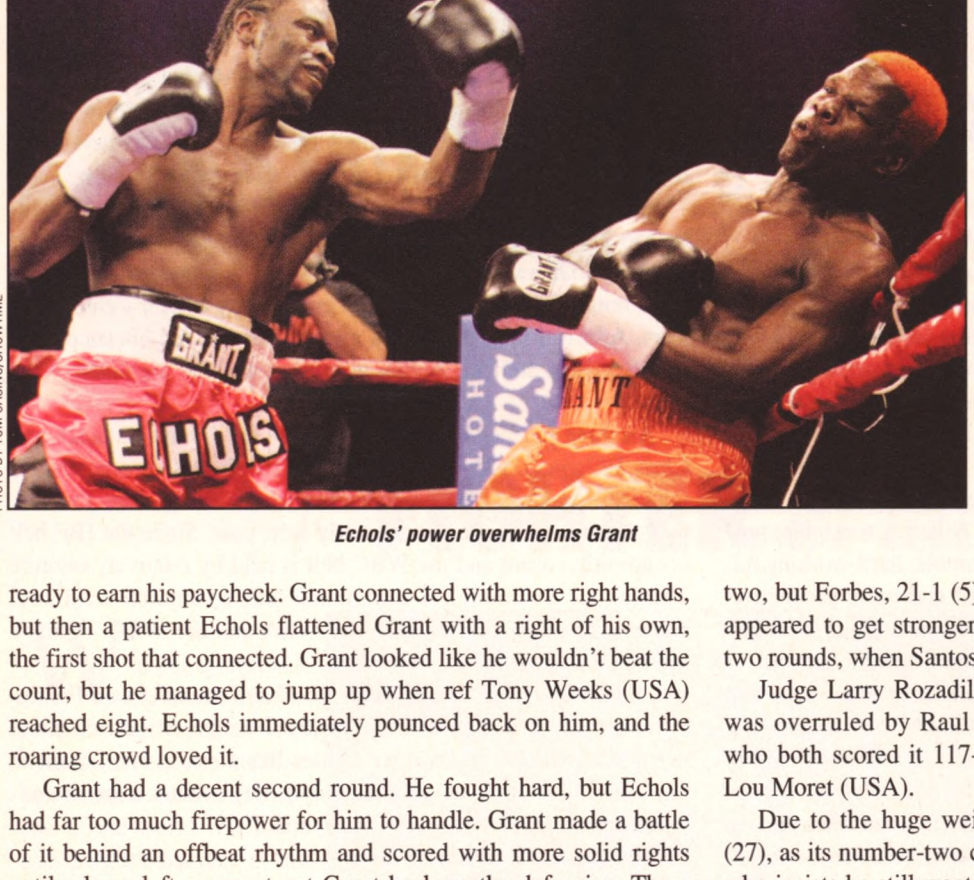


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Echols' power overwhelms Grant

ready to earn his paycheck. Grant connected with more right hands, but then a patient Echols flattened Grant with a right of his own, the first shot that connected. Grant looked like he wouldn't beat the count, but he managed to jump up when ref Tony Weeks (USA) reached eight. Echols immediately pounced back on him, and the roaring crowd loved it.

Grant had a decent second round. He fought hard, but Echols had far too much firepower for him to handle. Grant made a battle of it behind an offbeat rhythm and scored with more solid rights until a huge left uppercut put Grant back on the defensive. There were good exchanges at the bell.

Echols roared out with heavy leather in the third frame and quickly made Grant do a silly dance on unsteady pins. The crowd howled their disapproval when referee Tony Weeks rescued a dazed Grant, but there was no complaint from Grant, 14-9 (2), or his corner. The official time was 59 seconds of the round.

The fight was billed as an eliminator for Sven Ottke's IBF title. Echols, 29-4-1 (26), gave his potential foe plenty to think about, and gave the fans in Phoenix something to look forward to.

Promoter: Banner Promotions
(8-3-02)
Phil Woolever

Steve Forbes W 12 David Santos

Temecula, California: Despite losing the IBF junior lightweight title at the scales, Forbes tallied a 12-round split decision over Santos at the Pechanga Casino & Resort to salvage a measure of respect from an otherwise troubling situation.

Controversy arose when FOX SportsNet, which televised the bout, weighed Forbes again the day of the fight and discovered that he'd blown up to 152 pounds since the day-before-the-fight weigh-in, when he'd weighed 132¾, 2¾ pounds over the division limit. Santos, on the other hand, had only gained one pound after weighing in at 130.

Despite all the weight he was giving away, Santos, 31, gambled that he could overcome the disadvantage and win the belt anyway. How much the weight difference hampered him is difficult to ascertain, but it sure didn't help any.

Santos, St. Petersburg, Florida, off to a good start, moving well, scoring with his left, but the 25-year-old Forbes, Las Vegas, Nevada, blocked a lot of punches and also countered effectively. By the end of the third, Santos was bruised and swollen under his left eye.

Santos' best shot at a clear-cut victory came in the fifth when he rocked Forbes with a left hook and followed with a flurry. Forbes was forced to call upon all his defensive expertise to avoid being overwhelmed, but he rallied back with a series of clean blows of his own to end the round. Then it was Santos' turn again, but the exciting round drew to a close.

Many of the rounds were close. Santos was generally the busier of the two, but Forbes, 21-1 (5), was more accurate with his punches and appeared to get stronger as the fight progressed. And in the last two rounds, when Santos needed to turn it on, he petered out.

Judge Larry Rozadilla (USA) voted for Santos, 115-113, but was overruled by Raul Caiz (USA) and Adelaide Byrd (USA), who both scored it 117-111 in favor of Forbes. The referee was Lou Moret (USA).

Due to the huge weight disparity, the IBF kept Santos, 30-1 (27), as its number-two contender, while former beltholder Forbes, who insists he still wants to campaign as a junior lightweight, was demoted to the sixth position.

Promoter: Goossen-Tutor Promotions
(8-18-02)

Joe Calzaghe W 12 Miguel Jimenez

Cardiff, Wales: The spectacular setting of Cardiff Castle in the open air on a balmy August night failed to inspire local hero Calzaghe, 168, to one of his more impressive displays. A minor injury, sustained in the third round but subsequently found not to be a break as he had initially feared, inhibited the Welshman as he went about his work, but he still won every round against the outclassed Jimenez, 167, Las Vegas, Nevada, via Puerto Rico, to retain his status as the world's best fighter at super middleweight.

The show was billed as "Hard Knight," a reference to the medieval surrounds. But it became instead a hard night, not unduly troubling for Calzaghe, but certainly disappointing, and could not disguise his dejection at the end of the 12 rounds. Jimenez, who works as a doorman at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, had promised to unsettle Calzaghe and cause an upset, but when the time came to fight, he was surprisingly passive and his objective became merely to survive.

From the outset, the pattern was clear. Jimenez, 21-2 (13), employed a tight guard. It was left to Calzaghe, 34-0 (27), to make a fight of it. But the passion and potency that ran through his previous win on points against Philadelphia's Charles Brewer was sadly lacking. Too much of his labor was strangely flat. He did open up in that third round and looked dangerous, a solid right hook rattling off Jimenez' jaw after a hard right hurt the Puerto Rican but

Calzaghe easily beat Jimenez in a stinker

body. Jimenez, 32, was forced to give ground, and he did again in the fourth as Calzaghe, 30, ripped in a series of combinations. But from that point, the fight was destined to last the full course with little drama before the final bell.

Jimenez' trainer, Kenny Croom, exhorted his charge to be more positive, but to no avail. Calzaghe's own problems with his left hand were there to be exploited, but Jimenez showed no inclination to take advantage. Things only got worse when referee Dave Parris (England) took a point from Jimenez, probably unfairly, for a head-butt in round 10. Calzaghe boxed comfortably to a unanimous decision win, John Coyle (England), Harold Gomes (USA), and Mike Glienna (USA) all scoring, like THE RING, 120-107 for Calzaghe.

"You can't win spectacularly every time. I'm disappointed, but in the end I got the win and that's all-important," said Calzaghe, who is desperate to lure either world middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins or world light heavyweight champion Roy Jones into the ring.

Promoter Frank Warren is working hard to set up one or both of these bouts. "I've proposed a deal for Joe to fight Hopkins and Jones to fight [undefeated middleweight] Harry Simon and the winner of these two bouts to meet. Showtime is supportive of this plan, and I'm going to try to get HBO behind it too," said Warren.

Television: Showtime
Promoter: Sports Network
(8-17-02)
Brian Doogan

Daniel Santos W 12 Takaloo

Cardiff, Wales: The greater experience of Santos, 154, Puerto Rico, told against Takaloo, 154, England via Iran, as he bossed proceedings comfortably in the chief support to Calzaghe-Jimenez. Takaloo—real name Mehrdud Takaloobighashi—expressed total belief in his quest to win and break into the upper echelons of the competitive junior middleweight division, but Santos dealt summarily with his challenge to retain his hopes of a lucrative showdown against the likes of Oscar De La Hoya and Fernando Vargas.

Takaloo arrived in England from Tehran as a child with his father and mother and siblings. He announced himself on the domestic scene in Britain with a first-round stoppage of then-unbeaten Anthony Farnell last year before stopping Scott Dixon in a round and Gary Logan in 10. But the jump to Santos' level proved too great. The 26-year-old Olympic bronze medalist from the 1996 Games in Atlanta knocked out Ahmed Kotiev in the fifth round to win the WBO welterweight belt in May 2000 and stopped Yory Boy Campas in the 11th to lift the WBO junior middle belt in March. His goal now is to break into the 154-pound establishment, and against Takaloo, he demonstrated the calm assurance to make it possible.

In the opening round, he opened a cut over Takaloo's right eye that immediately disadvantaged the 26-year-old challenger. Takaloo had sparred almost 400 rounds in 14 weeks of preparation, but his strategy of bending his knees to launch attacks from a low position gave Santos the leeway to box, steal points, and stay in control. A left hook that felled the Puerto Rican in the fourth (he complained he was off-balance, but Takaloo's punch landed with significant enough force to convince American referee Geno Rodriguez) threatened to knock him off his comfortable position, but after six rounds Santos was comfortably ahead and showed no sign thereafter of losing the initiative.

The ringside physician inspected Takaloo's eye in the eighth, the left eye now also inconvenienced by the proximity of a seeping wound, but he was allowed to continue. A vicious onslaught almost finished him in the 11th round as he reeled around the ring

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Santos lands a southpaw jab to Takaloo's torso

from the effects of Santos' accurate and solid shots, but he regrouped during the interval and courageously dug down deep in the final round to last the course. The issue, however, was not in doubt. Mike Glienna (USA) scored 117-110, Harry Davis (Canada) 116-112, and Mickey Vann (England) 116-111, all for Santos. THE RING scored for Santos, 116-111.

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Sports Network

(8-17-02)

Brian Doogan

Sven Ottke KO 9 Joe Gatti

Leipzig, Germany: For those who question the knockout potential of Ottke, the German served up ample evidence of his ability to fire damaging blows. Having allowed the lightly regarded challenger to gain a foothold in the first half of the bout, Ottke, 167, Germany, raised his game and stopped Gatti, 167, Canada, in the ninth round to retain the IBF super middleweight title. It was the undefeated beltholder's division-record 15th defense.

In 28 wins, however, it was only his sixth knockout, a stunning statistic for so successful a fighter. His show of power here persuaded Gatti, 30-7 (22), to accuse him of using loaded gloves after he was hospitalized for the concussion he suffered.

"They were no regular punches," Gatti asserted. "I can't prove it, but something was wrong." Ottke described Gatti's charges as "rubbish." Gatti was admitted to the hospital after passing out in his hotel room, but was not deemed in any danger and was released a few days later.

For six rounds against Ottke, the 35-year-old challenger was dangerous himself. Trying to emulate his brother, Arturo, who was once the IBF junior lightweight titleholder, Gatti stood firm and battled effectively with Ottke, also 35. Perhaps this contributed to his demise. When he needs to, Ottke has demonstrated the ability to pull out bigger punches, as he did against Australian challenger Anthony Mundine, and he did here in the seventh.

A straight left and short right shook up the challenger and left him with a cut over his right eye. From that point, Gatti's chance of causing an upset was ended. He did land a blow that seemed to hurt Ottke in that seventh round, but the initiative remained very much with the German. Two rounds later, it was all over, a left and right sending Gatti to the canvas for the second time in the round as referee Rafael Argiolas (Italy) waved it over with 17 seconds remaining.

"I'm working toward matching Sven with Dariusz Michalczewski," said promoter Wilfried Sauerland. Joe Calzaghe, the only man rated above Ottke at super middle by THE RING, may also be on Ottke's agenda as he seeks a big-money match to end his career.

(8-24-02)

Brian Doogan

Miguel Barrera W 12 Roberto Leyv

Las Vegas, Nevada: Micky Ward and Arturo Gatti becam toasts of the boxing world for their epic battle in the 140-p division in May. Although there was far less hype and fa money at stake, tiny warriors Barrera and Leyva put on a s show over 12 action-packed rounds three months later. In th it was Barrera who took a well-deserved unanimous decisio lifted the IBF mini flyweight title from Leyva in a scintill rematch at The Orleans.

Challenger Barrera, 23, was a tenacious pit bull, boring in attacking Leyva throughout the night. But 22-year-old Me Leyva, making his second defense, wasn't just a catcher, a did enough pitching to keep the fight competitive and create o the most entertaining fights of the year.

Barrera, 104½, had fought outside of his native Colombia once previously, when he took on Leyva in Mexico on Septe 29, 2001. That fight ended in a third-round technical draw Leyva was cut over the left eye by an accidental headbut could not continue.

Leyva, 104½, suffered plenty of cuts and welts this time they were all from the brutal punches of Barrera. Barrera shorter and had to leap in with left hooks, but he scored wit punch over and over. Yet Barrera did not go head crazy, a pummeled Leyva to the body as well.

Leyva tried to fight back and succeeded in cracking Barrera strong right hands, but they seemed to have little impact on Colombian. Barrera was a whirlwind of activity, and he credite hard work in the gym for allowing him to keep up such a frenetic

"I had three months to get in condition and make a good fi he said.

He didn't just make a good fight. Marc Ratner, executive d tor of the Nevada Athletic Commission, said it was the best fi Nevada in 2002 and one of the best he had seen in quite some There was agreement on that all around.

By the 10th round, Leyva's face was swollen grotesquel

Barrera catches Leyva with a sneaky counter right

his eyes were nearly closed. In the 12th, it got worse for Leyva when Barrera's head hit him in the mouth and sent a couple of his teeth flying out toward the center of the ring. Referee Kenny Bayless (USA) called a brief halt to the action and dutifully retrieved the teeth and handed them to the defending titlist's cornermen.

The decision of the three American judges was unanimous, though closer than many would have expected. Dave Moretti had it 116-112, while Robert Hoyle and Fred Jones both had it 115-113. THE RING's card favored Barrera, 117-111. All three judges gave the last round to Barrera, 19-0-2 (11), but the fight would have been a majority draw if that final round had gone to Leyva, 21-1-1 (18).

Television: Telefutura

Promoter: Guilty Boxing

(8-9-02)

Kevin Iole

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Ref Luis Pabon saves Brown in the eighth

Alexander Munoz KO 2 Eiji Kojima

Osaka, Japan: Hard-punching Venezuelan Munoz, 114¾, retained the WBA super fly belt and extended his unblemished mark to 23-0 (23) by dispatching former regional titleholder Kojima, 115, with a single right at 2:18 of the second session. It was the 23-year-old WBA titlist's first defense.

The challenger, a tall Japanese southpaw, kept stalking the circling Munoz, who spent most of the first round trying to feel Kojima out. Late in the stanza, Kojima missed a big left and almost fell through the ropes, while Munoz landed a left hook and a short right to steal the round.

The second round saw Kojima turn loose and release big southpaw rights to the champ, who remained calm and kept moving about the ring. In a bizarre moment, both fighters landed solid shots simultaneously, and both almost hit the deck for a rare double knockdown. They both managed to stay up, however, though Kojima, 6-1 (1), again almost fell out of the ring.

No sooner had the fight resumed than Munoz' devastating right caught the rubbery-legged Japanese challenger, who was flattened and counted out by Panamanian referee Julio Cesar Alvarado.

Munoz, who had displayed his awesome punching power in dropping Celes Kobayashi five times en route to a title-winning eighth-round kayo in March, again showed his blitzkrieg here before the stunned audience. Munoz' next defense of the WBA belt will come in the U.S., according to his manager, Andres Gomez.

Promoter: Kanazawa Promotions

(7-31-02)

Joe Koizumi

Jean-Marc Mormeck KO 8 Dale Brown

Marseille, France: Mormeck, 189, France, overcame a serious injury to his right hand—which required surgery just six weeks before the bout—and a fast start by challenger Brown, 189½, Canada, to retain the WBA cruiserweight title at a 7,000-seat outdoor arena set up on the Prado beach. It was his first defense after seizing the belt from Virgil Hill, who pulled out after eight rounds last February.

The Frenchman aimed to prove that result was no fluke. Brown, however, did not make this easy. Boxing well over the opening few rounds, the Canadian took charge, and Mormeck was not looking particularly clever despite his home advantage. Eventually, he pierced Brown's guard with telling blows that bloodied his face and changed the course of the fight, and from the fifth round on, it became more and more unlikely that the title would be changing hands.

Utilizing his left jab to surprisingly significant effect, Brown, 28-3-1 (19), dictated terms in the opening few rounds, keeping the titleholder at a comfortable distance and amassing an early lead on points. But success went to his head prematurely.

"I began to think after the opening four rounds that Mormeck didn't hit that strong and I started to fight on the inside more and that was a big mistake," acknowledged Brown, 30. "It was my fault, and I paid for this."

Brown's handlers, Yvon Michel and Stefane Larouche, concurred. "Over the opening rounds," Michel said, "Dale set the tone of the bout, but he became overconfident. He stopped using his jab, which was working well, and that allowed Mormeck into the fight."

Sound defensive skills ensured that even in the opening rounds Mormeck, 30, was not overwhelmed under Brown's productive attack, and from the fifth round on, the Frenchman began to take over in the exchanges. Solid combinations began to land with ominous regularity on Brown's body and head, and the challenger's face was streaming blood when he walked back to his corner at the end of the seventh after Mormeck landed five hard shots just prior to the bell. The minute's respite gave the Canadian's corner time to clean their man up, but it hardly mattered. A sustained assault in the eighth forced referee Luis Pabon (Puerto Rico) to intervene.

"I really wanted to show that the Virgil Hill result was not just luck," Mormeck, 28-2 (20), said. "Once the fight started to be fought on the inside, I knew I would come out on top."

He couldn't have been as sure in the weeks and days leading up to the fight.

"I cut a tendon in my right hand 40 days before the fight," he said. "I had surgery the next day and had to recuperate for three days in the hospital, and it affected my training. Doctors told me not to fight, but I was determined to go ahead and win."

Promoter: AB Stars Productions
(8-10-02)
Brian Doogan

Sirimongkol Singmanassak KO 2 Kengo Nagashima

Tokyo, Japan: It was a lousy night for Japanese boxing, as local prospect Manabu Fukushima fell to "interim" WBC 122-pound beltholder Oscar Larios, and then hometown favorite Nagashima was destroyed by hard-punching Thailander Sirimongkol in a bid for the vacant WBC super featherweight title. Sirimongkol, 130, exploded with devastating rights, dropping Japanese southpaw Nagashima, 130, three times en route to a quick kayo victory at 2:22 of the second round.

Sirimongkol, 25, who claimed the belt vacated by Floyd Mayweather when "Pretty Boy" rose in weight earlier in the year, is a former WBC 118-pound titlist who jumped up three classes after losing his title on a seventh-round TKO to Joichiro Tatsuyoshi in 1997. That remains the only defeat on his sterling record, which now includes knockout victories in his last 12 fights.

In the first round, Nagashima cautiously kept moving and jabbing from his lefty stance, while the Thailander occasionally attempted to score with solid rights. Early in the second, Sirimongkol, 38-1 (22), caught his 26-year-old foe with a vicious and well-timed right to the chin, sending him to the deck with a thud. Nagashima barely pulled himself up and resumed fighting, only to fall again from another right hand from Sirimongkol, who mistakenly threw an additional shot at the opponent on the canvas. Referee Richard Davies (England) penalized the Thai fighter a point for the illegal shot, which seemingly gave Nagashima, 21-2-1 (12), some time to recover, but it made no difference. The aggressive Thailander promptly connected with another wicked right and collapsed him for the third time, ending the fight.

Promoter: Akihiko Honda's Teiken Promotions
(8-24-02)
Joe Koizumi

Derrick Gainer Tech. Draw 2 Daniel Seda

Carolina, Puerto Rico: As frustrating as it has been for fans to watch the career of Roy Jones unfold, it must be just as frustrating for Jones to watch the career of his buddy/protégé, "Smoke" Gainer, play out. The latest in a string of unfortunate incidents occurred at Roberto Clemente Walker Stadium when WBA featherweight beltholder Gainer, looking sharp and probably on his way to victory against undefeated mandatory challenger Seda, suffered an eye cut from a second-round clash of heads and had to settle for a technical dra

Gainer has outclassed Seda under fire

Gainer, 126, Pensacola, Florida, coming off a momen killing 15-month layoff due to contractual disputes and diff scheduling the Seda fight, showed no signs of rust. Just 45 se into the first round, the lanky 30-year-old southpaw lashed ou a lead left cross and floored Seda, 126, Puerto Rico. After r around for a few seconds, Seda gathered himself and beat the of referee Jose Rivera (Puerto Rico). But for the remainder round, the 26-year-old, who was so sensational defeating Konadu at Madison Square Garden in May '01, continued to overmatched and unready for his first shot at a major belt. G landed left hands whenever he wanted to, rocking Seda agai in the round with a left and finishing with an impressive five-p combination just before the bell.

The second round was much closer, as Gainer, 38-5-1 employed a great deal of movement and didn't take the fight t Puerto Rican nearly as forcefully as he did in the first. In r spect, he should have tried to get Seda, 18-0-1 (15), out of when he had a chance, because about two minutes into the r the fighters' heads came together and produced a gash Gainer's left eyelid. It was in a bad spot, but didn't appear bleeding much at all when the ringside doctor took a quick lo it and immediately called off the fight at the 2:13 mark. Ha fight been anywhere other than Puerto Rico, where the loca looked in serious danger of suffering his first loss, Gainer pro would have been afforded the chance to fight on a bit longer.

The crowd, which also witnessed the co-feature bet Nelson Dieppa and Jhon Molina end in a second-round tech draw (on a much more serious and bloody cut to Dieppa), b the decision lustily. Gainer, too, was disappointed.

"I don't want to retain my title by a headbutt," Gainer, maki second defense, said. "At the same time, I don't want them to fast one on the scorecards. Being in Puerto Rico, I didn't know was going to happen."

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New Face

(Continued from page 26)

my pride. I always wanted to be the b everything. I'm not going to retire u get a belt."

The 19-year-old lightweight Houston, Texas, learned a major less the Hernandez fight. He found o could survive a badly cut right eye, a lip, and second-round knockdown- first in his life—to persevere and cl victory that was frightfully in doubt the final bell. Diaz, 17-0 (7), has go to win five straight following the dis ing affair, including a 10-round sh against tough Peter Nieves that was vised on ShoBox in late-August.

The Nieves victory was Diaz' bes formance to date. Using a piston-lik Diaz kept constant pressure on Nie respectable fighter who came in t bout with a 15-4-1 (8) mark. Diaz sco knockdown in the fourth round wi overhand right, and judges Robert G (100-88), Emile Conforte (100-89) Kason Cheeks (99-89) had no doubt the outcome. It was the second con tive time Diaz went 10 rounds, a served as further proof—in front national TV audience—that the c incident was a memory.

But first, Diaz needed closure. Be of his physical maturity in the ring easy to lose sight of the fact that D still only 19. But his parents, Fidenci Oliva, haven't lost sight of that fact needed to ease their minds, because were more concerned with Juan's ps logical well-being than the bruises face.

"I went home and saw the figh heard [Showtime analyst] Bobby Cz that it wasn't right that I was crying," recalled. "I was just happy to get th those eight rounds. I was cut, I w low, and I managed to pull out the was really happy, but at the same ti was sad. I couldn't believe I was kn down. All of that happened to me, managed to win, so I cried. W watched the fight, I taped over th when I was crying. I erased that. time I would see it, I would feel bad the knockdown about 10 or 20 tim couldn't believe it during the fight o

Diaz survived a major scare to defeat Hernandez

the fight that I was knocked down. I usually like people to see me being aggressive and coming forward. What really hurt me is I like to please the crowd, and they booed me. That really hurt me.

"My mother saw what happened in the Hernandez fight, and she couldn't watch the fight anymore after I was knocked down. She went back to her room and she started praying that I would be okay. My father watched the fight and he got paralyzed in his chair. He couldn't move out of his seat. He was scared what could happen to me mentally. They were both scared I wouldn't be able to recover. My parents love me so much they never saw me in a situation like that. Both of my parents spoke to me after the fight and they told me they'd respect my decision to quit boxing. They thought I'd quit. I told them the same thing I told Mr. Savannah, that I wasn't going to retire until I got a belt."

Ronnie Shields, Diaz' trainer, missed the Nieves fight due to a family commitment, giving way to his assistant, Derwin Richards, who worked Diaz' corner. But Shields saw some things on the tape of the fight that delighted him. Diaz stuck with the fight plan that Shields had designed, working behind his jab and showing versatility.

Shields has been stressing the importance of the jab and more lateral movement to avoid punches. Early in Diaz' career, he had a tendency to brawl, and it came with great success, helping him win each of his first five fights within three rounds. But that spoiled Diaz into thinking he could knock out everyone that he faced.

"Juan listens very well, and we're starting to get him to fight all styles," said Shields, who also trains world welterweight champion Vernon Forrest. "Juan isn't really a strong puncher, but he has a great jab and he has to use that jab. Juan was used to knocking people out in the amateurs, but he can't do that now. He's fighting grown men, and right now, his body hasn't matured fully yet. He's thinking in the ring now, instead of going in there trying to overpower people. He's stepping to the side when he's finished punching. He's getting out of punching range. We're trying to keep him in that mind frame. He's still a boy and he's not going to overpower people, but as he gets older, he'll be able to hurt people with one punch."

Conditioning is one area in which Shields will never have a problem with Diaz. It's the reason why Diaz got into boxing in the first place. When Diaz was eight years old, he was 105 pounds. He worked the baby fat off, and by the time he was in high school, he was working out at six in the morning, going to school, then coming right back to the gym after school. He'd train four to five hours a day, do his homework, go to bed, and then start all over again.

"Juan was this fat little kid," remembered Savannah, with a bellowing laugh. "It scares me that I've seen the kid grow up right before my eyes. I've watched this kid mature into a very, very smart young man. Juan now is a boy in man's skin. He's very special in so many different ways. He goes to Houston-area detention centers and tells these kids to have a dream and stick to their dreams. He's great for boxing. Juan's father and mother have been in great in Juan's development."

Diaz' father works in a sweltering machine shop, his mother at a laundromat. Each day Juan sees his parents come home exhausted, and it's a life his parents don't want for him. Diaz is the first high school graduate in his family and is a sophomore at the University of Houston, majoring in general studies with the intention of attending law school one day. Diaz makes more money than his parents, but any attempt to help them out financially is rebuffed.

The hard life his parents endure is motivational fuel for Diaz, just like the Hernandez fight. The residue still lingers, kept alive by the media that ask about it every time Diaz has an upcoming fight. But it's been the best thing that's happened to Diaz, according to Shields.

"After the fight, Juan came up to me and said he was sorry, and I said, 'Sorry for what?'" Shields recalled. "During that fight, I knew Juan was hurt, but the kid has guts and he fought on pure heart. His instincts can take him as far as he wants to go. I see him as a world champion someday. It doesn't matter where you cry. There's nothing wrong with crying. There *is* crying in boxing." ■

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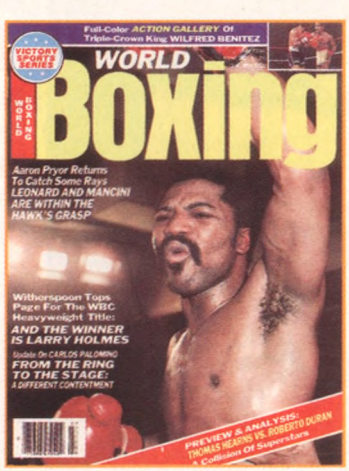

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☐ JAN/83	☐ JUN/85	☐ APR/87	☐ AUG/95	☐ WIN/99
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Alphabet Ratings

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS
(Ratings as of July 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: John Ruiz (USA)
1. Evander Holyfield (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Vitaly Klitschko (UKR)
4. Nicolay Valouev (RUS)
5. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
6. Larry Donald (USA)
7. Jameel McCline (USA)
8. David Tua (NZ)
9. Danny Williams (GB)
10. Hasim Rahman (USA)
11. Fres Oquendo (PR)
12. Mike Tyson (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)
1. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
2. James Toney (USA)
3. Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
4. Virgil Hill (USA)
5. O'Neil Bell (USA)
6. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
7. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
8. Luis Pineda (PAN)
9. Dale Brown (CAN)
10. Valery Brudov (RUS)
11. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
12. Ravea Springs (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
Champ: Bruno Girard (FRA)
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Clinton Woods (GB)
3. Lou Del Valle (USA)
4. David Telesco (USA)
5. Mads Larsen (DEN)
6. Reggie Johnson (USA)
7. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
8. Montell Griffin (USA)
9. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
10. Rocky Torres (USA)
11. Rodney Moore (USA)
12. Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Byron Mitchell (USA)
1. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
2. Antwun Echols (USA)
3. David Starie (GB)
4. Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)
5. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
6. Danilo Haussler (GER)
7. Thomas Tate (USA)
8. Markus Beyer (GER)
9. Manuel Siaca (PR)
10. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
11. Zafarou Ballogou (TOG)
12. Nordin Ben Salah (NETH)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
Champ: William Joppy (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Bert Schenk (GER)
3. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
4. Robert Allen (USA)
5. Howard Eastman (GB)
6. Maselino Masoe (AUSTRL)
7. Keith Holmes (USA)
8. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
9. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
10. Erland Betare (FRA)
11. Evans Ashira (DEN)
12. Lee Blundell (USA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Fernando Vargas (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
3. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
4. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
5. Angel Hernandez (USA)
6. Travis Simms (USA)
7. Michael Rask (DEN)
8. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
9. Mehrdud Takaloo (GB)
10. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
11. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)
12. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (CR)
1. Vacant
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Michael Trabant (GER)
4. Jose Rivera (USA)
5. Andrew Lewis (GUY)
6. Golden Johnson (USA)
7. Vincent Phillips (USA)
8. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
9. Danny Perez (USA)
10. Frederic Klose (FRA)
11. Felix Flores (PR)
12. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Champ: Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
1. Soulemane M'Baye (FRA)
2. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Randall Bailey (USA)
6. Khalid Rahilou (FRA)
7. Micky Ward (USA)
8. Zab Judah (USA)
9. Ener Julio (COL)
10. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
11. Miguel Cotto (PR)
12. Antonio Mesquita (BRA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Leonard Dorin (CAN)
1. Miguel Callist (PAN)
2. Vacant
3. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
4. Juan Lazcano (USA)
5. Raul Balbi (ARG)
6. Steve Johnston (USA)
7. Juan Gomez-Trinidad (PR)
8. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
9. Angel Manfredy (USA)
10. Edson Xuxa Nascimento (BRA)
11. Colin Dunne (GB)
12. Alex Trujillo (USA)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Acelino Freitas (BRA)
Champ: Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)
1. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
2. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
3. Phillip Ndou (SA)
4. Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)
5. Lakva Sim (MON)
6. Jose Miguel Cotto (PR)
7. Silvano Usini (ITA)
8. Carlos Hernandez (SAL)
9. Jesus Chavez (MEX)
10. Nate Campbell (USA)
11. Yong Soo Choi (KOR)
12. Randy Suico (PHIL)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Derrick Gainer (USA)
1. Daniel Seda (PR)
2. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
3. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
4. Naseem Hamed (GB)
5. Injin Chi (KOR)
6. Antonio Cermeno (VEN)
7. Lewis Woods (US)
8. Victor Polo (COL)
9. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
10. Chris John (IND)
11. Spend Abazi (DEN)
12. Oscar Leon (COL)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Osamu Sato (JAP)
1. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
2. Yober Ortega (VEN)
3. Paulie Ayala (USA)
4. Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
5. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
6. Johnny Armour (GB)
7. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)
8. Michael Brodie (GB)
9. Enrique Sanchez (MEX)
10. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. Napapol Kiattisachokchai (THAI)
12. Israel Vasquez (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
1. Leo Gamez (VEN)
2. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
3. Eidy Moya (VEN)
4. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
5. Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)
6. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
7. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
8. Genaro Garcia (USA)
9. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
10. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
11. Moises Castro (NIC)
12. Danny Romero (USA)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Alexander Munoz (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Mbwana Matumla (TNZ)
3. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
4. Sompichai Pisnurachank (THAI)
5. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
6. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)
7. Luis Bolanos (COL)
8. Luis Perez (NIC)
9. Jesus Rojas (VEN)
10. Kazuhiro Ryuko (JAP)
11. Takuya Kiya (JAP)
12. Meiji C.P. Gym (THAI)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Morel (USA)
1. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
2. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
3. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
4. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
5. Damaen Kelly (GB)
6. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
7. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
8. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
9. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
10. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
11. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
12. Peter Culshaw (GB)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)
1. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
2. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
3. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
4. Masibulele Makepula (SA)
5. Alex Sanchez (PR)
6. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
7. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
8. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
9. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
10. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
11. Tatsuo Kayashida (JAP)
12. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS
Champ: Noel Arambulet (VEN)
1. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
2. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
3. Khulile Makeba (SA)
4. Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)
5. Manasak Yootthakit (THAI)
6. Daniel Reyes (COL)
7. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
8. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
9. Pornsawan Pramuk (THAI)
10. Wandee Charoen (THAI)
11. Juan Landaeta (VEN)
12. Juan Palacios (NIC)

WBC RATINGS
(Ratings as of August 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
2. Evander Holyfield (USA)
3. Hasim Rahman (USA)
4. Mike Tyson (USA)
5. Jameel McCline (USA)
6. David Tua (NZ)
7. Fres Oquendo (USA)
8. Chris Byrd (USA)
9. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
10. Danny Williams (GB)
11. Clifford Etienne (USA)
12. Jeremy Williams (USA)
13. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
14. Lamon Brewster (USA)
15. Tim Witherspoon (USA)
16. Michael Moorer (USA)
17. Ray Mercer (USA)
18. Joe Mesi (USA)
19. Larry Donald (USA)
20. Lance Whitaker (USA)
21. Luan Krasniqi (GER)
22. Maurice Harris (USA)
23. Monte Barrett (USA)
24. Brian Nielsen (DEN)
25. Vaughn Bean (USA)
26. Nikolay Valouev (RUS)
27. Timo Hoffman (GB)
28. Dimitry Bakhtov (KAZ)
29. Peter Okhello (UGA)
30. David Defiagbon (CAN)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
2. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
5. Louis Azille (DR)
6. Dale Brown (CAN)
7. James Toney (USA)
8. Sebastiaan Rothmann (SA)
9. Michael Nunn (USA)
10. Tufan Bagci (TUR)
11. Carlos Cruzat (CHI)
12. Jason Robinson (USA)
13. Bruce Scott (GB)
14. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
15. Kelvin Davis (USA)
16. Ramon Garbey (USA)
17. Rudiger May (GER)
18. Virgil Hill (USA)
19. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
20. Carl Thompson (GB)
21. Alain Simon (FRA)
22. Krysztov Wlodarczyk (POL)
23. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
24. Guillermo Jones (PAN)
25. Roman Kovalchuk (UKR)
26. Mohamed Ben Guesmia (ALG)
27. Kenny Keene (USA)
28. Frederic Serrat (FRA)
29. Alexander Petkovic (GER)
30. Gregory Drosd (RUS)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Clinton Woods (GB)
2. Yawe Davis (ITA)
3. Antonio Tarver (USA)
4. Mads Larsen (DEN)
5. Eric Harding (USA)
6. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
7. Reggie Johnson (USA)
8. Jorge Castro (ARG)
9. Montell Griffin (USA)
10. Derrick Harmon (USA)
11. Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)
12. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
13. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
14. David Telesco (USA)
15. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
16. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
17. Mario Tonus (ITA)
18. Silvio Branco (ITA)
19. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
20. Demetrius Jenkins (USA)
21. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
22. Stipe Drews (CRO)
23. George Jones (USA)
24. Arturo Rivera (MEX)
25. Alejandro Lakatus (ROM)
26. Rocky Torres (USA)
27. Sergio Baez (ARG)
28. Elvir Muriqi (ALB)
29. Tony Oakey (GB)
30. Julian Letterlough (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Lucas (CAN)
1. Markus Beyer (GER)
2. David Starie (GB)
3. Danilo Haussler (GER)
4. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
5. Antwun Echols (USA)
6. Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)
7. Glenn Catley (GB)
8. Dingaan Thobela (SA)
9. Omar Sheika (USA)
10. Jurgen Brahmer (GER)
11. Mehdi Sanoune (FRA)
12. Yoshinori Nishizawa (JAP)
13. Dan Batchelder (USA)
14. Henry Porras (CR)
15. Robin Reid (GB)
16. Brian Magee (GB)
17. Mario Veit (GER)
18. Anthony Hanshaw (USA)
19. Scott Pemberton (USA)
20. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
21. Sam Hill (USA)
22. Nordin Ben Salah (HOL)
23. James Lubwana (UGA)
24. David Reid (USA)
25. Vinny Paz (USA)
26. Juan Nelongo (SPA)
27. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
28. Jeff Lacy (USA)
29. Ross Thompson (USA)
30. Jean Paul Mendy (FRA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Erland Betare (FRA)
2. Felix Trinidad (PR)
3. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
4. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
5. Naotaka Hozumi (JAP)
6. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
7. Raymond Joval (HOL)
8. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
9. Robert Allen (USA)
10. Raul Marquez (USA)
11. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
12. Alejandro Berrio (COL)
13. Oure Evans (KEN)
14. Aslan Kodzoev (RUS)
15. Carl Daniels (USA)
16. Jerry Elliott (NIG)
17. Travis Simms (USA)
18. Andras Galfi (HUN)
19. Tokunbo Olajide (CAN)
20. Jorge Sendra (SPA)
21. Mariano Carrera (ARG)
22. Tony Ayala (USA)
23. Lansana Djallo (BEL)
24. Delroy Leslie (GB)
25. Kingsley Ikeke (CAN)
26. Quentin Smith (USA)
27. Jermain Taylor (USA)
28. Stephan Trabant (GER)
29. Satoru Suzuki (JAP)
30. Maselino Masoe (NZ)

SUPER WELTE
Champ: Oscar De L
1. Fitz Vanderpool
2. Nader Hamdan
3. Bronco McKar
4. Roman Karmaz
5. Akira Ohigash
6. Wayne Alexand
7. Mamadou Thia
8. Steve Roberts
9. Angel Hernand
10. Kofi Jantuah
11. Richard Willia
12. Kassim Ouma
13. Michael Rask
14. Christophe Ca
15. Alex Bunema
16. Rhoshii Wells
17. J.C. Candelo
18. Sergei Dzindzi
19. Santiago Samar
20. Mihaly Kotai
21. Rodney Jones
22. Carlos Bojorqu
23. Emmett Linto
24. Sam Garr (US
25. Kirino Garcia
26. Michael Jones
27. Joachim Alcin
28. Christopher He
29. Gary Jones (US
30. Joya Kawai (J

WELTERWEIG
Champ: Vernon Fo
1. Shane Mosley
2. Jose Luis Cruz
3. Carlos Baldom
4. Thomas Damga
5. Danny Perez (U
6. Sergio Martine
7. Hercules Kyvelo
8. Manuel Gome
9. Rafael Pineda
10. Rev Santillan
11. Michel Trabant
12. Andrew Lewis
13. Jawaid Khaliq
14. Michele Orland
15. Christian Bladi
16. Alexander Vera
17. Golden Johnso
18. James Hare (G
19. Julian Holland
20. Alessandro Du
21. Felix Flores (P
22. Jeffrey Hill (U
23. Hassan Al (DE
24. Frederic Klose
25. Juan Carlos Ra
26. Neil Sinclair (G
27. Luther Smith (G
28. Charles Whitak
29. Miguel Rodrigu
30. Carlos Quintan

SUPER LIGHTW
Champ: Kostya Tsz
1. Gianluca Branc
2. Ricky Hatton (G
3. James Leija (US
4. Oktay Urkal (TU
5. Micky Ward (US
6. Arturo Gatti (CA
7. Zab Judah (USA
8. Omar Weis (AR
9. Masakazu Satak
10. Hector Camach
11. Gabriel Maqui
12. Miguel Cotto (P
13. Sharmba Mitch
14. Eamonn Magee
15. Soulemane M'B
16. Ben Tackie (GH
17. Golden Johnso
18. Ener Julio (COL
19. Francisco Bojal

20. Wilfredo Vilches (ARG)
21. Randall Bailey (USA)
22. Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)
23. Ricardo Williams (USA)
24. Vince Phillips (USA)
25. Junior Witter (GB)
26. Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP)
27. Vivian Harris (USA)
28. Terrron Millett (USA)
29. Pablo Sarmiento (ARG)
30. Fabrice Colombel (FRA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)
1. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
2. Steve Johnston (USA)
3. Juan Lazcano (USA)
4. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
5. Carlos Gerena (PR)
6. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
7. Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)
8. Aldo Rios (ARG)
9. Colin Dunne (GB)
10. Bobby Vanzie (GB)
11. Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
12. Sandro Casamonica (ITA)
13. Julian Wheeler (USA)
14. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)
15. Jose Luis Juarez (MEX)
16. Diego Jimenez (ARG)
17. Julio Diaz (USA)
18. Zimele Mpusula (SA)
19. Miguel Callist (PAN)
20. Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)
21. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
22. Efren Hinojosa (MEX)
23. Michele Delli Paoli (ITA)
24. Esteban Mortalez (COL)
25. Cristian Bejarano (MEX)
26. Gary Balletto (USA)
27. Suyan Sanchat (RUS)
28. Michael Clark (USA)
29. Steve Murray (GB)
30. Gil Alipio (MEX)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
2. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
3. Jesus Chavez (USA)
4. Philip Ndou (SA)
5. Randy Suico (PHIL)
6. Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV)
7. Affif Djelti (FRA)
8. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
9. Toncho Tontchev (BUL)
10. Kevin Kelley (USA)
11. Daniel Alicea (PR)
12. Jorge Paez (MEX)
13. Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)
14. Pedro Miranda (SPA)
15. Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)
16. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
17. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
18. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
19. Mzonke Fana (SA)
20. Orlando Salido (MEX)
21. Nate Campbell (USA)
22. Yongsoo Choi (KOR)
23. Javier Alvarez (ARG)
24. Alex Arthur (GB)
25. Silvano Usini (ITA)
26. Lamont Pearson (USA)
27. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
28. Daniel Attah (NIG)
29. Miguel Angel Huerta (MEX)
30. Ricardo Silva (ARG)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Erik Morales (MEX)
2. Injin Chi (KOR)
3. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
4. Naseem Hamed (GB)
5. Michael Brodie (GB)
6. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
7. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
8. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
9. Scott Harrison (GB)
10. Manuel Medina (MEX)
11. Luis Fuentes (MEX)
12. William Abelyan (USA)
13. Guty Espadas (MEX)
14. Junior Jones (USA)
15. Takalani Noluvo (SA)
16. Panther Yanagida (JAP)
17. Hector Acero-Sanchez (DR)
18. Fernando Velardez (MEX)
19. Daniel Seda (PR)
20. Yangsoo Sung (KOR)
21. Orlando Soto (PAN)
22. David Murillo (MEX)
23. Zahir Raheem (USA)
24. Frankie Toledo (USA)
25. Cristobal Cruz (MEX)
26. Roger Medal (NIC)
27. Oscar Leon (COL)
28. Rocky Juarez (USA)
29. Hector Velazquez (MEX)
30. Anthony Tshehla (SA)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Willie Jorrin (USA)
1. Kiattisak Chocchoi (THAI)
2. Paulie Ayala (USA)
3. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
4. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
5. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
6. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
7. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
8. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
9. Jyunichi Nakazato (JAP)
10. Wayne McCullough (IRE)
11. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
12. Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)
13. Bones Adams (USA)
14. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
15. Arnel Barotillo (AUSTRL)
16. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
17. Youngjin Cho (KOR)
18. David Donis (USA)
19. Jaekwang Chung (KOR)
20. Fabio Oliva (ARG)
21. Yober Ortega (VEN)
22. Wethya Singwangcha (THAI)
23. Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)
24. Michael Alldis (GB)
25. Frankie Archuleta (USA)
26. Joan Guzman (DR)
27. Turcay Kaya (FRA)
28. Phillip Payne (USA)
29. Norihisa Tomimoto (JAP)
30. Jose Luis Valbuena (VEN)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)
1. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
2. Genaro Garcia (USA)
3. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
4. Jess Maca (PHIL)
5. Diego Morales (MEX)
6. Spend Abazi (DEN)
7. Noel Wilders (GB)
8. David Guerault (FRA)
9. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
10. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)
11. Abner Cordero (PHIL)
12. Danny Romero (USA)
13. Julio Zarate (MEX)
14. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
15. Mark Johnson (USA)
16. Julio Gamboa (NIC)
17. Francisco Mateos (MEX)
18. Gerardo Martinez (MEX)
19. Fabien Guillerme (FRA)
20. Kyonchul Park (KOR)
21. Eidy Moya (VEN)
22. Pete Frissina (USA)
23. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
24. Moises Castro (NIC)
25. Nicky Booth (GB)
26. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
27. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
28. Ryuichi Minoriyama (JAP)
29. Steve Molitor (CAN)
30. Eduardo Escobedo (MEX)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Masamori Tokuyama (JAP)
1. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)
2. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
3. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
4. Luis Bolanos (COL)
5. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
6. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
7. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
8. Jose Beranza (MEX)
9. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
10. Sot Sot Veeraphol (THAI)
11. Shingo Sasaki (JAP)
12. Erick Lopez (MEX)
13. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
14. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
15. Luis Perez (NIC)
16. Eiji Kojima (JAP)
17. Takuya Kiya (JAP)
18. Alexander Knight (RUS)
19. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
20. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
21. Erik Barcelona (PHIL)
22. Sergio Santillan (ARG)
23. Julio Coronel (COL)
24. Jovy Oracion (PHIL)
25. Shin Ogata (JAP)
26. Trinidad Mendoza (MEX)
27. Tat Torres (MEX)
28. Lunga Ntontela (SA)
29. Roberto Bonilla (NIC)
30. Jose Navarro (USA)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)
1. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
2. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
3. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
4. Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)
5. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
6. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
7. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
8. Hawk Makepula (SA)
9. Gerson Guerrero (MEX)
10. Everardo Morales (MEX)
11. Omar Narvaez (ARG)
12. Damaen Kelly (GB)
13. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
14. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
15. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
16. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
17. Koji Koyama (JAP)
18. Rolly Lunas (PHIL)
19. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
20. Mimoun Chent (FRA)
21. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
22. Hayato Asai (JAP)
23. Gabriel Elizondo (USA)
24. Evaristo Primero (MEX)
25. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
26. Peter Culshaw (GB)
27. Yosuke Morishima (JAP)
28. Gilberto Keb-Baas (MEX)
29. Jason Booth (GB)
30. Gabula Vabaza (SA)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Yosam Choi (KOR)
1. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
2. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
3. Agustin Luna (MEX)
4. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
5. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
6. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
7. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
8. John Molina (COL)
9. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
10. Rodrigo Garcia (MEX)
11. Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)
12. Victor Burgos (MEX)
13. Alex Sanchez (PR)
14. Pilkoo Kang (KOR)
15. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
16. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
17. Jun Kitano (JAP)
18. Vuyisile Bebe (SA)
19. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
20. Juan Centero (NIC)
21. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
22. Jinho Kim (KOR)
23. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
24. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
25. Minsoo Jang (KOR)
26. Andrea Sarritzu (ITA)
27. Omar Nino (MEX)
28. Keisuke Yokoyama (JAP)
29. Steve Msimango (SA)
30. Samransak Singmanassak (THAI)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
1. Khulile Makeba (SA)
2. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
3. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
4. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
5. Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)
6. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
7. Noel Arambulet (VEN)
8. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
9. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
10. Juan Palacios (NIC)
11. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
12. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
13. Sarikalek O. Eakarin (THAI)
14. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
15. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
16. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
17. Jairo Arango (PAN)
18. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
19. Hiroyuki Abe (JAP)
20. Omar Soto (MEX)
21. Eagle Okuda (JAP)
22. Wele Maqolo (SA)
23. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
24. Manny Melchor (PHIL)
25. Valentin Leon (MEX)
26. Fernando Luna (MEX)
27. Miguel Barrera (MEX)
28. Daisuke Iida (JAP)
29. Lorenzo Trejo (MEX)
30. Decho Bankluaygym (THAI)

IBF RATINGS
(Ratings as of August 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Chris Byrd (USA)
2. Evander Holyfield (USA)
3. David Tua (NZ)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. Jameel McCline (USA)
6. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
7. Fres Oquendo (USA)
8. Clifford Etienne (USA)
9. Tim Witherspoon (USA)
10. Monte Barrett (USA)
11. Oliver McCall (USA)
12. Eliecer Castillo (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
1. James Toney (USA)
2. Vacant
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
5. Dale Brown (CAN)
6. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
7. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
8. Ravea Springs (USA)
9. Jason Robinson (USA)
10. Jorge Castro (ARG)
11. Kelvin Davis (USA)
12. Arthur Williams (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Montell Griffin (USA)
4. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
5. David Telesco (USA)
6. Derrick Harmon (USA)
7. Eric Harding (USA)
8. Reggie Johnson (USA)
9. Yawe Davis (ITA)
10. Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)
11. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
12. Julian Letterlough (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Antwun Echols (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Danilo Haussler (GER)
4. Mads Larsen (DEN)
5. David Starie (GB)
6. Thomas Tate (USA)
7. Markus Beyer (GER)
8. Charles Brewer (USA)
9. Glenn Catley (GB)
10. Richard Grant (USA)
11. Fernando Zuniga (USA)
12. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Felix Trinidad (PR)
3. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
4. Erland Betare (FRA)
5. Robert Allen (USA)
6. Carl Daniels (USA)
7. Raymond Joval (HOL)
8. Howard Eastman (GB)
9. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
10. Ali Ennebati (FRA)
11. Bert Schenk (GER)
12. Bea Diallo (BEL)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
1. Bronco McKart (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Angel Hernandez (USA)
4. Alex Bunema (USA)
5. Andrei Pestriaev (RUS)
6. Kassim Ouma (USA)
7. J.C. Candelo (COL)
8. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
9. Steve Roberts (GB)
10. Michael Rask (DEN)
11. Travis Simms (USA)
12. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
4. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
5. Cory Spinks (USA)
6. Rafael Pineda (COL)
7. Shane Mosley (USA)
8. Jose Rivera (USA)
9. James Hare (ENG)
10. Antonio Diaz (MEX)
11. Jose Celaya (USA)
12. Robert Frazier (USA)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Micky Ward (USA)
4. Arturo Gatti (USA)
5. Emanuel Augustus (USA)
6. Zab Judah (USA)
7. Ben Tackie (GHA)
8. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
9. Omar Weis (ARG)
10. Carlos Vilches (ARG)
11. James Leija (USA)
12. Randall Bailey (USA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Paul Spadafora (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Juan Lazcano (USA)
4. Angel Manfredy (USA)
5. Victoriano Sosa (DR)
6. Steve Johnston (USA)
7. Julian Wheeler (USA)
8. Leavander Johnson (USA)
9. Alex Trujillo (PR)
10. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
11. Dorin Spivey (USA)
12. Stefano Zoff (ITA)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Vacant
2. David Santos (USA)
3. Jesus Chavez (USA)
4. Carlos Hernandez (USA)
5. Joel Casamayor (USA)
6. Steve Forbes (USA)
7. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
8. Daniel Alicea (USA)
9. Nate Campbell (USA)
10. Toncho Tontchev (BUL)
11. Lamont Pearson (USA)
12. Orlando Salido (MEX)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Johnny Tapia (USA)
1. Manuel Medina (MEX)
2. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
3. Oscar Leon (PR)
4. Frankie Toledo (USA)
5. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
6. Michael Brodie (ENG)
7. Victor Polo (COL)
8. William Abelyan (USA)
9. Naseem Hamed (ENG)
10. Istvan Kovacs (HUN)
11. David Toledo (USA)
12. Angel Vazquez (USA)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
4. F. Rakkiatgym (INDO)
5. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
6. Paulie Ayala (USA)
7. Enrique Sanchez (MEX)
8. Fernando Velardez (USA)
9. Jorge Eliecer Julio (COL)
10. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. David Donis (USA)
12. Bones Adams (USA)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Tim Austin (USA)
1. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
2. Vacant
3. Pete Frissina (USA)
4. Diego Morales (MEX)
5. Genaro Garcia (MEX)
6. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)
7. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
8. Adan Vargas (MEX)
9. Danny Romero (USA)
10. Mark Johnson (USA)
11. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
12. Toshiaki Nakajima (JAP)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Felix Machado (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Martin Castillo (MEX)
4. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)
5. Luis Bolano (COL)
6. Ricardo Vargas (USA)
7. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
8. Samson 3K-Battery (THAI)
9. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
10. Fahsung 3K-Battery (THAI)
11. Kobayashi Yosuke (JAP)
12. Oscar Andrade (MEX)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. David Guerault (FRA)
4. Damaen Kelly (GB)
5. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
6. Wandee Chareon (THAI)
7. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
8. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
9. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
10. Mike Trejo (USA)
11. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
12. Angel Priolo (COL)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Lopez (MEX)
1. Jose Burgos (MEX)
2. Alexander Sanchez (PR)
3. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
4. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
5. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
6. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
7. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
8. Will Grigsby (USA)
9. Juan Keb Baas (MEX)
10. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
11. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
12. Andrea Sarritzu (ITA)

MINI FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Miguel Barrera (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
5. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
6. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
7. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
8. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
9. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
10. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
11. Sarikalrk Ekarin (THAI)
12. Isaac Bustos (MEX)

CLASSIC

From THE RING, September 1984

LIVINGSTONE BRAMBLE'S

NOT JUST A "WILD AND CRAZY GU

By Rob Lawin

The 8 a.m. sun bathes the western coastline of St. Croix, an island that time forgot but that Livingstone Bramble remembered to come home to. Life here, Bramble says, is an acquired taste. It certainly runs the gamut of the palate. On a shaded roadside, a seafood market is open for business, featuring sunrise catches of lobster and conch. Many of those who stop to look and smell are headed to factories where they will help transform sugar cane into rum. Others are en route to the fields to reap okra, mango, and sweet pepper.

The world's newest lightweight champion, though, is acting coconuts.

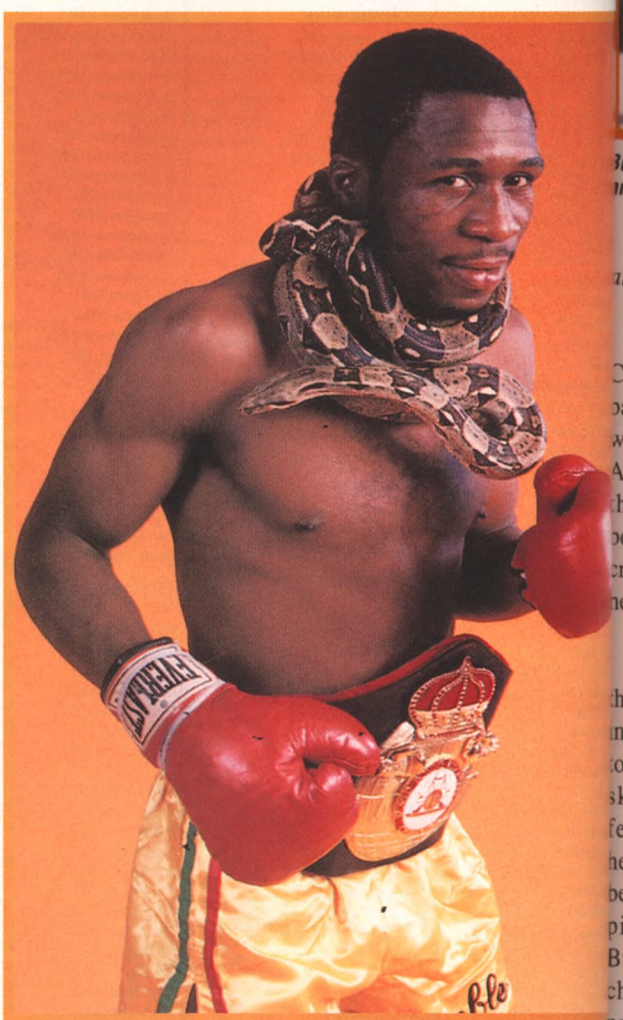
Three weeks after knocking the adjectives out of Ray Mancini, Bramble has decided to climb another mountain—except it's a tree. The thin palm gracefully slopes over a stretch of beachfront property in Fredericksted, curving 20 feet in the air, high enough to protect its hard-shelled fruit from most sane souls. Then there's Bramble. For months he has bragged of how, as a youth, no coconut could exceed his mammoth reach, and now he has the chance to prove it. He begins loosening his sneakers as well as his shoulder muscles.

"Watch, I show you, Tommy," the now-barefoot fighter tells his trainer, Tommy Parks. He mounts the tree like a 10-toed sloth begins inching himself skyward.

"Bramble?" says Parks.

"See, I told you." *Six feet. Six-and-a Seven.*

"Bramble!"



When Livingstone Bramble wasn't beating up Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini for the WBA lightweight title, he had a tendency to do eccentric outside of the ring, like climb 20-foot palm trees in his native St. Croix.

Bramble dominated the prefight hype and took a lot of the attention away from Mancini, who was arguably the most popular boxer in the world at the time.

"You didn't believe." *Eight. Eight-and-a-half. Nine.*

"Bramble—puh-lease!"

The fighter stops, looks out toward the Caribbean, smiles, then quickly slides back to earth. Perhaps he saw a rematch with Mancini on the horizon, or bouts with Aaron Pryor or Hector Camacho. One of those fights would keep him in store-bought coconuts for life. "Bramble may be crazy," says Lou Duva, his manager, "but he's sure not stupid."

***

"I beat Mancini first with my mind, then with my fists," said Bramble, seconding the notion that there are various ways to skin a cat. He has, of course, literally skinned one. His affinity for dead felines—and live dogs and snakes—helped Bramble become a *cause celebre* before he became WBA champ by stopping Mancini in 14 rounds June 1 in Buffalo. Rarely had such an unheralded challenger so thoroughly dominated the proceedings of a title fight. Bramble became an overnight star, taking the play away from a boxer who was arguably the most popular in the world.

Then came the dichotomy: Inside the ropes, boxing's number-one eccentric proved to be highly disciplined. "Bramble fought a more intelligent fight than I ever thought he could," said Teddy Brenner, the matchmaker for Top Rank.

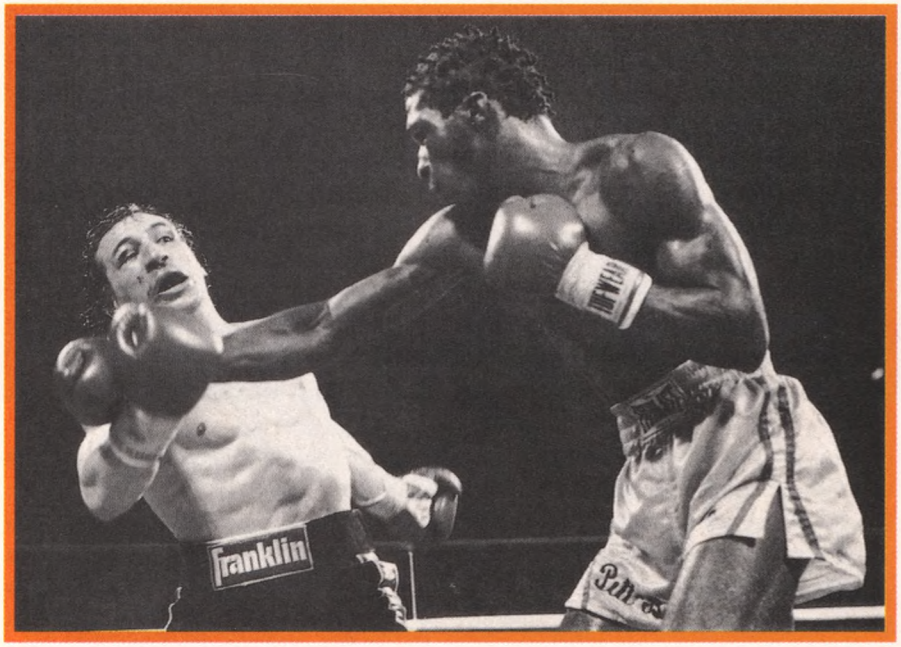
Discipline was nothing new to Bramble. A Rastafarian, he has not eaten meat in 13 years, and he prepared for the biggest fight of his life dining on yams, pumpkin, and coconut—the kind found on fruit stands—as well as fish and spaghetti. After the fight, he continued to dress in the simple, earthy style of his religion, the only new accessory his gold title belt.

Bramble was so secure in his culture that he even helped concoct a "voodoo doctor," whose supposed duty was to make Mancini more hittable than normal, if that was possible. The fact is there is less chance of finding a voodoo doctor in the United States Virgin Islands than there is of finding an American M.D. who'll make house calls. But Bramble's actions did not ruffle any feathers in his native land.

"Because Bramble is so strong in his religious beliefs, the people knew right away it was a joke and laughed along with it," said Adelbert M. Bryan, senator for the 15th legislature of the Islands. "I'm telling you, the voodoo man is now a hero. People here want him to set up a practice."

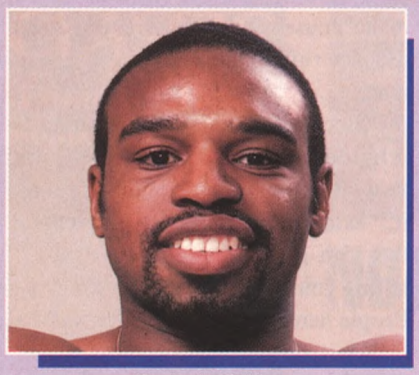
As it turned out, the now celebrated "Dr. Doo"—as in Voo—knew more about layups than hiccups and is currently working toward his masters in sociology from Cal State-Los Angeles.

Bramble now lives in Passaic, New Jersey, but there is only one home for the 23-year-old with the self-proclaimed "coconut head." One of 10 children of Henry and Carmen Bramble, he came to St. Croix from his native St. Kitts in 1970. His father, a former oil refinery foreman, and mother, a retirement home worker, still live in Fredericksted, a city that seems suspended in time. The area is dotted with ruins of sugar cane plantations, the result of a successful 1848 rebellion by Cruzian slaves against the controlling Danish government. There is a bar in St. Croix called "Redemption," whose motto is hand-



Despite his eccentricities outside the ring, Bramble proved to be very disciplined inside the ropes. In stopping Mancini in 14 rounds, "Bramble fought a more intelligent fight than I ever thought he could," remarked Top Rank matchmaker Teddy Brenner.

THE RING RATINGS, September 1984



Rocky Lockridge

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Larry Holmes, Easton, PA
1. **Gerrie Coetzee,** South Africa
2. **Tim Witherspoon,** Philadelphia, PA
3. **Michael Dokes,** Akron, OH
4. **Pinklon Thomas,** Wyncote, PA
5. **Greg Page,** Louisville, KY
6. **Mike Weaver,** Los Angeles, CA
7. **Trevor Berbick,** Canada
8. **David Bey,** Pittsburgh, PA
9. **John Tate,** Knoxville, TN
10. **James Smith,** Magnolia, NC

CRUISERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Carlos DeLeon, Puerto Rico
1. **Osvaldo Ocasio,** Puerto Rico
2. **Anthony Davis,** Las Vegas, NV
3. **John Odhiambo,** Uganda
4. **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad,** Brooklyn, NY
5. **S.T. Gordon,** Los Angeles, CA
6. **Alfonso Ratliff,** Chicago, IL
7. **Henry Hearns,** Los Angeles, CA
8. **Marvin Camel,** Missoula, MT
9. **Leroy Murphy,** Chicago, IL
10. **Randy Stephens,** Dallas, TX

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Michael Spinks, St. Louis, MO
1. **Dwight Braxton,** Camden, NJ
2. **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad,** Brooklyn, NY
3. **Eddie Davis,** Freeport, NY
4. **Willie Edwards,** Detroit, MI
5. **Marvin Johnson,** Indianapolis, IN
6. **Oscar Rivadeneyra,** Vineland, NJ
7. **Peter McIntyre,** Los Angeles, CA
8. **Jean-Marie Emebe,** Cameroon
9. **Richie Kates,** Bridgeton, NJ
10. **Fulgencio Obelmejias,** Venezuela

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marvin Hagler, Brockton, MA
1. **Mustafa Hamsho,** Syria
2. **James Shuler,** Philadelphia, PA
3. **James Kinchen,** San Diego, CA
4. **Dwight Davison,** Detroit, MI
5. **Juan D. Roldan,** Argentina
6. **Don Lee,** Gary, IN
7. **Tony Sibson,** England
8. **Frank Fletcher,** Philadelphia, PA
9. **Alex Ramos,** Bronx, NY
10. **Curtis Parker,** Philadelphia, PA

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Thomas Hearns, Detroit, MI
1. **Mike McCallum,** New York, NY
2. **John Mugabi,** Uganda
3. **Fred Hutchings,** Stockton, CA
4. **Mark Medal,** Jersey City, NJ
5. **Davey Moore,** Bronx, NY
6. **David Braxton,** Detroit, MI
7. **Earl Hargrove,** Philadelphia, PA
8. **Herol Graham,** England
9. **James Green,** Irvington, NJ
10. **Wilfred Benitez,** Puerto Rico

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Donald Curry,** Fort Worth, TX
2. **Milton McCrory,** Detroit, MI
3. **Colin Jones,** Wales
4. **Nino LaRocca,** Italy
5. **Tommy Ayers,** Cincinnati, OH
6. **Simon Brown,** Washington, D.C.
7. **Maurice Blocker,** Washington, D.C.
8. **Pedro Vilella,** New York, NY
9. **Marlon Starling,** Hartford, CT
10. **Roger Stafford,** Philadelphia, PA

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Aaron Pryor,** Cincinnati, OH
2. **Bill Costello,** Kingston, NY
3. **Gene Hatcher,** Ft. Worth, TX
4. **Johnny Bumphus,** Clementon,
5. **Ronnie Shields,** Port Arthur, TX
6. **Leroy Haley,** Las Vegas, NV
7. **Saoul Mamby,** Bronx, NY
8. **Patrizio Oliva,** Italy
9. **Gary Hinton,** Philadelphia, PA
10. **Hugo Hernandez,** Argentina

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Edwin Rosario,** Puerto Rico
2. **Livingstone Bramble,** Passaic,
3. **Tyrone Crawley,** Philadelphia,
4. **Ray Mancini,** Youngstown, OH
5. **Howard Davis Jr.,** Glen Cove,
6. **Harry Arroyo,** Youngstown, O
7. **Hector Camacho,** New York,
8. **Jose Luis Ramirez,** Mexico
9. **Robin Blake,** Levelland, TX
10. **Jimmy Paul,** Detroit, MI

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Rocky Lockridge, Maple Shade, NJ
1. **Hector Camacho,** New York,
2. **Roger Mayweather,** Las Vegas,
3. **Bobby Chacon,** Oroville, CA
4. **Rafael Solis,** Puerto Rico
5. **Edgar Castro,** Venezuela
6. **Julio Cesar Chavez,** Mexico
7. **Mario Martinez,** Mexico
8. **Yonekura Ikhoni,** Japan
9. **Jean Marc Renard,** Belgium
10. **Rolando Navarrete,** Hawaii

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Eusebio Pedroza,
1. **Wilfredo Gomez,** Puerto Rico
2. **Juan LaPorte,** New York, NY
3. **Barry McGuigan,** Ireland
4. **Azumah Nelson,** Ghana

painted on a gray shingle: PHYSICAL SLAVERY WAS ABOLISHED, BUT MENTAL SLAVERY CONTINUES. AFRICAN REDEMPTION WILL COME WITH MENTAL EMANCIPATION.

Because it provided him with "a sense of direction," Bramble, as a teenager, joined the Rastafarians, the religious sect that follows the teachings of Hailie Selassie, the last emperor of Ethiopia.

"The goal of all Rastafarians is to be totally free, body and soul," said Bramble. Best known for its members braiding their hair in long "dread locks," the sect was popularized by Jamaican reggae singers such as Bob Marley and Peter Tosh. On June 1, Bramble entered the ring to a song written by Marley, entitled, appropriately enough, "Buffalo Soldier."

Buffalo Soldier, dread locks Rasta
Fighting on arrival, fighting for
vival,
When I analyze the struggle, to
makes a lot of sense.

"To most of the people in Ame there is only one Western culture," Bramble, "and that's why Mancini w popular. He was the All-America gla

5. Marcos **Villasana,** Mexico
6. Johnny **De La Rosa,** Miami, FL
7. Ruben **Castillo,** Bakersfield, CA
8. Jackie **Beard,** Detroit, MI
9. Bernard **Taylor,** Knoxville, TN
10. Richard **Savage,** W. Monroe, LA

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: **Vacant**
1. Jaime **Garza,** Los Angeles, CA
2. Victor **Callejas,** Puerto Rico
3. Mike **Ayala,** New York, NY
4. Loris **Stecca,** Italy
5. Felipe **Orozco,** Colombia
6. Juan **"Kid" Meza,** Los Angeles, CA
7. Leo **Cruz,** Dominican Republic
8. Bernardo **Checa,** Panama
9. Julian **Solis,** Puerto Rico
10. Raul **Gonzalez,** Venezuela

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: **Richard Sandoval,** Los Angeles, CA
1. Albert **Davila,** Pomona, CA
2. Jeff **Chandler,** Philadelphia, PA
3. Jiro **Watanabe,** Japan
4. Enrique **Sanchez,** Dominican Republic
5. Oscar **Muniz,** Los Angeles, CA
6. Edgar **Roman,** Venezuela
7. Payao **Poontarat,** Thailand
8. Gaby **Canizales,** Laredo, TX
9. Rafael **Orono,** Venezuela
10. Harold **Petty,** Fort Worth, TX

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: **Gabriel Bernal,** Mexico
1. Santos **Laciar,** Argentina
2. Jung-Koo **Chang,** Korea
3. Francisco **Quiroz,** Dominican Republic
4. Lupe **Madera,** Mexico
5. Freddie **Castillo,** Mexico
6. Koji **Kobayashi,** Japan
7. Katsuo **Tokashiki,** Japan
8. Prudencio **Cardona,** Colombia
9. German **Torres,** Mexico
10. Charlie **Magri,** England

boy. People knew his story and liked it. But they don't know how much dedication it takes to be a Rastafarian, to believe in Jah and nothing else.

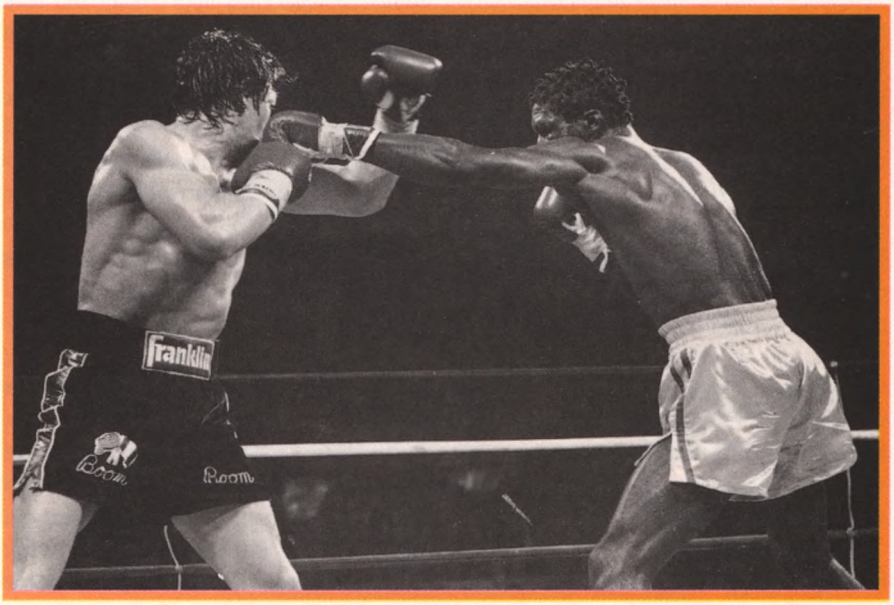
"I'm a man. I'm not calling Mancini a lady, but he had everything on a plate. I was in the top 10 for more than two years, but nobody wanted to fight me, and that can test your discipline. That's why it

Mancini, not the most skilled defensive fighter in the world, absorbs a right hand. Bramble employed a fake "voodoo doctor" to supposedly make "Boom Boom" even more hittable than usual.

bothers me when people get the wrong idea. I don't want to be thought of as something I'm not."

The perception that Bramble marches to a different steel drum extends even to his homeland. Said St. Clair Murraine, the sports editor of the *Virgin Islands Daily News* and a longtime Bramble observer: "Livingstone is a strong man with strong beliefs—but he's still kooky."

Murraine should see Bramble's Passaic residence. A week after beating Mancini, the new champ arrived for a photo session at his cramped three-room apartment on Sherman Street. When Bramble got out of his car, there was Snake, one of his five



Bramble's 74-inch reach and his ability to use either hand effectively caused problems for Mancini, whose straightforward style made the fight all the more easy for Bramble.

Main Events promoter Dan Duva (holding the microphone) said that Bramble would get the chance to prove he could defeat all styles. The Duvas spoke confidently of a future bout against then-junior welterweight titlist Aaron Pryor and of a potential Mancini rematch.

pit bull terriers, standing on the porch. The front door to the house was ajar.

"It's my fault—I didn't lock the door and he knows how to open it if it's not locked," said Bramble.

Bramble posed for pictures with a 5½-foot boa constrictor named Dog. "Wouldn't hurt a fly," Bramble said. Rodents are a different story. In Buffalo, Bramble said his first duty as a new champ would be to buy "two large rats" for Dog and Rebel, a much nastier reticulated python he keeps under lock and key.

Bramble says he tries to emulate the fierceness of his animals and is especially enamored of the fact they "show no fear." Before the title fight, Mancini's manager, Dave Wolf, accused Bramble of having the same scruples as the snakes. The challenger reportedly called the champion a "murderer," in reference to Mancini's fatal bout with Deuk Koo Kim. Bramble said he was misquoted, but refused to back down from the spirit of the remark. "I can't say it's in bad taste when we go in the ring and try to beat each other's head in," he said. "Besides, I was trying to intimidate Mancini and I think I got to him. The night of the fight, he thought he was fighting a crazy man he could bomb out in a couple of rounds."

There was a method submerged beneath the apparent madness. Bramble's reach is 74 inches, only four inches shorter than Thomas Hearns'. Parks' superb fight plan had Bramble utilizing his nine-inch advantage on the inside, Mancini's turf. When tucked to his sides, his long arms covered virtually all his upper body so, with a few twists and turns, Bramble was able to deflect the vast majority of Mancini's wide bodyshots. In countering with uppercuts and straight right hands, he did "Boom Boom" one better.

"Livingstone went boom, boom, boom," said Duva.

A natural right-hander, Bramble can go lefty with equal effectiveness. But sometimes he goes both at once. He has the ability to square his upper body and lead with either hand, like the old toy Rock 'Em, Sock 'Em Robots.

"The fact that he's a little unorthodox helps him," said Brenner. "He's not jab-hook by the book." Brenner admits, however, "the final chapter on Bramble is far from being written."

Because of his give-and-take style, the brave Mancini was—and always will be—ripe for the taking. Moreover, his straightforward approach was made for Bramble, whose only loss in 23 fights was to a boxer, Anthony Fletcher.

"If all guys fought like Mancini, Bramble would be champ forever," said Harold Weston, the matchmaker for Madison Square Garden. "But they aren't, so it's only a matter of time. When he meets someone who can box—a Howard Davis or Tyrone Crawley—there'll be a new champ."

Promoter Dan Duva of Main Eve Lou's son, said Bramble will get chance to prove "he can defeat all styl The Duvas talk confidently of a b against Aaron Pryor. But Bramble wil matched first with Kenny "Bang Ba Bogner—a less explosive versio Boom Boom and someone Bramble already kayoed—or Gato Gonzalez bef a Mancini rematch.

Bramble left high school in his ju year to concentrate on his amateur car In 1979, to prepare for a 1980 Olym trip that ended with a boycott, Bram came to the mainland. He settled Passaic, where he received his high sch equivalency diploma, then attend Bergen Community College. After semester, he quit school to take care of son Aluja, but he still has aspiration becoming an elementary school teac and spends his summers as "director aquatics" (read: "swim instructor") at Passaic Boys Club.

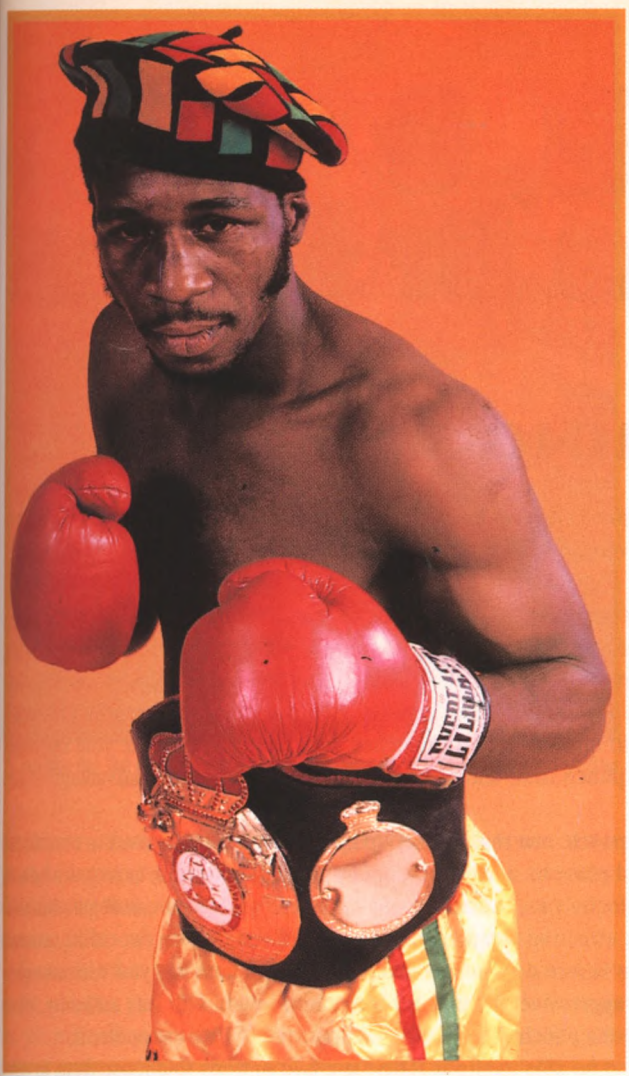
"It's hard to believe the guy w teaches these young kids not to be afr of the water is the same guy who t Mancini up," said Carl Creech, the B Club director. "He has a sensitive side a rough side, but to his credit, he ne lets one come in conflict with the other."

***

Less than a month after becoming c the second world champ from the Isla (after Emile Griffith), Bramble brings belt there. It sits around his thin waist he steps off the plane at St. Croi Alexander Hamilton Airport and both m and precious metal are met by a sea cheers as deep as the Caribbean. T crowd of 3,000 includes the Ebonites, 18-piece steel drum band, two local be ty queens, and a Moko Jumbi, a colorf ly-garbed man on stilts whose prese officially designates the occasion as "f tive."

Signs and banners are in a syntax ar ward to visitors—"BUFFALO K SUPERSTAR NO. 1" and "KID TOU CHAMPION"—but the feeling of natio pride is eminently clear.

"He made it known he was from t Islands, and the people are obviou grateful," says Senator Bryan. "Many o ers who have left for the 'big island' U.S.)] and who succeeded, sometimes get their roots. But Bramble even prom



Proud of his Rastafarian culture, Bramble wasted little time bringing the title belt back to St. Croix. A crowd of 3,000 greeted Bramble upon his return at St. Croix's Hamilton Airport.

ed the fact he was a Rastafarian, which gave pride to a culture within a culture. He proved that, despite being different in the eyes of many, you can accomplish much."

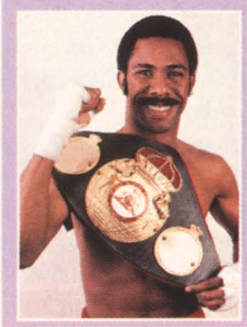
The motorcade takes Bramble to the tiny capital of Christiansted, then down the island's major highway—a two-way street called Centerline Road—to Fredericksted. Later that evening, at the P&M Restaurant, Bramble dines on boiled grouper, a whitefish, and fungi, a native cornmeal concoction, and makes Duva and Parks do the same. "Bramble remembers what's good," says Barbara, the P&M chef.

"The way he follows his culture amazes me," says Lou Duva, who once believed coconuts were grown in Miami gift shops. "In training camp, while other guys were grabbing gooey desserts, Bramble stuck with fruits and vegetables, his special teas and herbs. Then, when I walk into his dressing room the night of the fight, there he is with his hair braided in, whaddya call 'em, cornfields. I tell him, 'Bramble, you're nuttier than I thought.' He tells me in his Rasty Man voice, 'This is the style, mon. I will enter the ring tonight like the man from the earth.'

"Hell, I'm from Jersey. I tell him 'If you don't win, you'll be part of the earth.' Son of a gun, now he owns it." ■

THE RING, September 1984

The Cover: Livingstone Bramble, fresh off defeating a popular titleholder in Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini, welcomed the world to a look at his unique life. Bramble enjoyed climbing palm trees in his native St. Croix and getting into the heads of his opponents with witch doctors. But Bramble's fists did more damage to Mancini's head than any witch doctor could.



Pedroza Looks To Rock Rocky: WBA featherweight titlist Eusebio Pedroza was outgrowing the 126-pound class after making a record 18 title defenses. The Panamanian was looking to make a step up in weight against WBA junior lightweight titlist Rocky Lockridge, someone whom Pedroza had beaten twice by decision at featherweight.

Davis Denied Again: Howard Davis Jr., playing the underdog role for the first time in his career, fought valiantly against WBC lightweight beltholder Edwin Rosario before losing by the narrowest of margins in a 12-round split decision. It marked the second time the fleet-footed Davis failed to win the WBC 135-pound belt, as he had also lost to Scotsman Jim Watt in '80.

Roberto Retires: After losing to Tommy Hearns by second-round knockout, Roberto Duran decided to retire. THE RING gave the Panamanian legend a pictorial sendoff, with a montage of shots from Duran's greatest triumphs, including his victory over Ken Buchanan (pictured). As we all know now, the retirement didn't stick.

Fighter Of The Month: Tommy Hearns raised the stakes for a possible showdown with Marvelous Marvin Hagler by demolishing Roberto Duran in two rounds to retain the WBC junior middleweight belt. It was—and probably still is—the greatest victory of "The Hit Man's" career.

THE A, B, C & DEAS OF BOXING

COUNTERING THE JAB

By Tommy Deas

You've watched the world's best fighters and read about them in this magazine, and now you want to give boxing a try, or at least learn a little more about the mechanics of the sport. Welcome to THE RING'S bi-monthly instructional feature on boxing's basics. Bear in mind, the techniques described here are just one of many approaches to the Sweet Science. The most important thing is to find a good coach and follow his instructions. All instructions on these pages are geared for an orthodox, or right-handed, stance. If you are left-handed, merely turn everything around.

Once you have become comfortable with how to throw the basic punches and how to def them, you will want to move your boxing education forward and begin to learn how to co terpunch.

Counterpunching allows you to turn your defense into offense and to take advantage of the op ings your opponent leaves when he mounts an offense of his own. An effective counterpuncher the ability to chip away at his opponent's confidence, leaving him unsure whether it's worth t throw his own punches, because he knows there may be a heavy price to pay when he do Counterpunching also allows you to throw your own punches with less risk, because your oppo has already committed to his own punch first, and is no longer in position to take advantage of openings you may leave for him.

Since the jab is boxing's basic punch, one that can set up other punches or be used to control distance and pile up points, the best place to start your counterpunching education is to learn how counter a jab. Once you become effective at countering your opponent's jab, you can negate his a ity to use one of the sport's most effective weapons against you. Even one or two solid coun punches will make him think twice before deciding to use his jab again, leaving you with an op nent who's more cautious and less aggressive. It may also entice him to jab with less authority, s he may not want to fully commit to the punch if he knows you have the ability to counter it.

To counter the jab, you must first be able to slip it. There are two options to choose from in s ping your opponent's jab, and each one leaves you with a counterpunching opportunity.

When you slip the jab to the outside, you are in position to counter the jab with a right cross. slip to the outside, you must time the incoming jab and lean from the waist so that your head mo a few inches to the right—toward the outside of your opponent's body—as his jab sails by your ear. This leaves you in a natural position to throw a right cross over the jab you have just slipp Shift your weight to your right foot as you slip, then snap your right hip and shoulder forward as

Light heavyweight Demetrius Nalls (red trunks) demonstrates the correct way to counter the left jab, against sta mate Wade "Rock" Lewis. First, Nalls ducks outside (left), and then he comes over the top with a counter right.

To counter the jab with a left, Nalls slips inside of Lewis' jab by bending at the waist (left), and then shoots his left hook to his sparring partner's chin.

launch your counter right over the jab. If you launch your counterpunch with proper urgency, the forward momentum of the punch should assure that your shot will reach its target before your opponent can get his jab safely back in place to defend against it.

Remember that you are avoiding a gloved fist that is only a few inches wide, so you don't need to slip too far to the right to make the jab miss. If you slip too far, you will be out of position to throw a proper counter. You will be off-balance, which will take away from the power of your right cross, and the punch will have to travel much farther, giving your opponent a greater opportunity to see it coming in time to take evasive action. Remember to bring your hand back high after you've thrown it, so you get it back in place before you leave your opponent with his own chance to throw a counterpunch.

Slipping the jab to the inside leaves you with two effective counters to choose from. To slip to the inside, lean to the left from the waist as the jab approaches—toward the inside of your opponent's body—so it sails by your right ear. Once again, make sure you don't slip too far so you avoid leaving yourself off-balance.

Once you have slipped the jab, you can choose between countering with your own left jab or with a left hook. In either case, you need to shift your weight to your left foot, which will put the force of your own body weight behind your counter. Bend your left knee slightly as you shift your weight.

To counter with a jab, simply snap forward with your left hip and shoulder as you extend your jab. You should have an unobstructed path to your opponent's face. This counterpunching move is especially effective against an opponent with a longer reach, as it allows you to slip inside the reach of his jab to throw your own jab.

To counter with a left hook, rotate your left hip and shoulder to the right as you launch the punch. Extend your left first in a circular path toward the target with the elbow bent at roughly a 90-degree angle. Adjust the angle to account for the distance, bending your elbow more than 90 degrees if your opponent is farther away or less than 90 degrees if he is closer.

With either left-hand counter, bring the punch back into position quickly after you've thrown it.

A common mistake to avoid when countering the jab—either with your left or right—is allowing your chin to lift up as you punch. It is tempting to want to lift your chin so you can get a better view of the target, especially since your opponent's punch may obscure your line of sight, but forgetting to keep your chin tucked in safely is always a recipe for disaster. A well-thrown counter doesn't mean much if you give your opponent an easy target.

Another common mistake is leaning too far forward when you slip the punch. You may want to bend forward slightly at the waist as you slip, but only a couple of inches or so. If you lean in too far, you will lose your balance and also leave yourself with little leverage with which to throw your counterpunch. As always, a good rule of thumb is to never let your head get in front of your left knee. Make sure your head moves to the side when you bend your waist to counter, and not forward or backward.

The key to all counterpunches is timing, something you will not likely have when you first start practicing your counters. The more you practice, the better you will get at learning just when to pull the trigger on your counter. As always, it helps to practice while shadowboxing with a friend. Have him throw slow-motion jabs in your direction and practice your counters, then switch places and jab for him while he practices the counters. Once you have the moves down, you will be ready to try it against a live opponent in sparring to see how far you've come.

Next: Countering the right. ■

Tommy Deas is a sportswriter for the Tuscaloosa (Alabama) News and a trainer of professional and amateur boxers.

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

SAY IT AIN'T SO, TITO

At age 29, Felix Trinidad is already a boxing legend. He is a true warrior and a class act in and outside of the ring. While I was not always a fan of his, over the last few years I fell in love Tito's boxing skills, his power, and his all-business approach to the sport. Tito knew only one w go about his career: Fight every great fighter in his weight class, beat them, move up in weight, repeat the process. I am saddened by Tito's recent announcement of his retirement, but only fo own selfish reasons. I can only hope that the announcement is part of some strategy to get the fi he wants. But from what I know of Tito, it's not.

DANIEL HO
Sacramento

SHEIKA SHAFTED?

I am extremely perplexed at how "The Bible Of Boxing" did not recognize Omar Sheika top 100 fighters in "THE RING 100" in the November 2002 issue. Sheika has proven time and again that he is undoubtedly the most exciting super middleweight in the world. His two-round hilation of Stephane Ouellet proved he is indeed in a league of his own in terms of supplying the sport needs for invigoration, and his war with Thomas Tate, in which he got a raw deal be referee Eddie Cotton failed to stop the fight when Tate was in bad shape in the second round another reminder of how exciting he is.

Fighters like Omar are what boxing needs, and THE RING has a responsibility to showcas most exciting fighters, despite win-loss ratio. While fighters with skill like Roy Jones and F Mayweather capture our admiration, fighters like Micky Ward, Omar Sheika, and Arturo Gatti ture our soul.

BRIAN MIH
Detroi

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Felix "Tito" Trinidad may only be 29, but he's achieved legendary status in the minds of many boxing fans. Reader Daniel Horel, like many fans, was saddened to hear that Trinidad (pictured vs. Oscar De La Hoya) has retired.

UNDERPAID OVERACHIEVERS

I am writing in regard to boxing's ridiculous system of salaries. Take a look at the Micky Ward-Arturo Gatti fight, w was amazing. Both fighters received less than $1-million, p much janitors' money for a fight of that caliber. Then take a at Lennox Lewis-Mike Tyson, where both fighters earned than 30 times what Gatti and Ward took home. Did Tyson Lewis put 30 times the effort into their bout? No!

So why, I ask, do Tyson and Lewis receive so much more Gatti and Ward? I am only a 13-year-old, so I don't really k why such a thing occurs, but I do know one thing: Simple will tell you that Gatti and Ward deserve more than what were paid. It's just not fair.

JASON NICH
Brampton, On

POPPING OFF ABOUT POP

I would like to applaud THE RING for its stance against alphabet boys, but there's just one thing I need for you to clea

Micky Ward and Arturo Gatti deserved big bucks for their first fight, yet, laments reader Jason Nichols, it's guys like Mike Tyson and Lennox Lewis who usually get that money. Thankfully, Ward and Gatti will be compensated appropriately in their November 23 rematch.

Floyd Mayweather has moved up to lightweight. Acelino Freitas and Joel Casamayor become number one and number two, respectively, in the junior lightweights. Freitas has beaten Casamayor, so why doesn't he now have world champion status?

LEONARD THEOBALDS
Ilford, England

[Editors's note: Freitas is not considered junior lightweight world champion by THE RING because at the time he defeated Casamayor, Mayweather was still the number-one rated 130-pounder. It wasn't until several weeks later that Mayweather, after mulling over a fight with Freitas, announced his move up to 135 pounds. THE RING's policy does not allow for the number-two and number-three rated fighters, which was what Casamayor and Freitas were at the time, to fight to fill a title vacancy, and we will not award championships retroactively.]

NO MORE RUIZ, PLEASE!

The John Ruiz-Kirk Johnson fight was a disgrace to boxing, and I need to voice my opinion on Ruiz. He has skill, a nice jab, and a pretty hard right hand. Unfortunately, his fear of being knocked out again is so great, he forgets his skills in favor of this terrified rush-in-and-grab style so he can get close and stay out of harm's way. This creates a horrifically boring and ugly fight with any fighter, not just Evander Holyfield, but now Kirk Johnson, another usually exciting fighter. HBO, Showtime, or whoever else, please don't televise any more John Ruiz fights.

JEREMY GUERRIERI
Cleveland, OH

COTTON'S NOT ROTTEN

In Nigel Collins' "Ringside" editorial in the November '02 issue, he wrote that, in retrospect, Eddie Cotton should not have made THE RING's list of the 10 best refs in the sport. How is it that Cotton could be removed from the list after one fight? Is your ranking system so fickle that these men have to walk on egg shells to be recognized? Give me a break.

What Cotton did in the Lennox Lewis-Mike Tyson fight may not have been popular with many (and clearly not with THE RING), but he did the best job he could and had the guts to do what he believed was right. Recall that Richard Steele was highly criticized for his work in two Julio Cesar Chavez fights (against Meldrick Taylor and Frankie Randall) and Tyson-Razor Ruddock I. Joe Cortez repeatedly lost control in Bowe-Holyfield I. Yet Cortez is ranked highly in your ref ratings, and Steele is one of the most respected referees of all-time. If you, or anyone else, are suggesting that Cotton did anything less than uphold the highest standards of his profession, if you are suggesting that he somehow willingly did the wrong thing, well then you don't know Eddie Cotton.

Cotton *is* one of today's best referees and has earned the distinction as such. If anything has been unearned, it is the piece of credibility that your ref ranking system had right before it un-recognized Eddie Cotton.

JOSH CRAIG
Spokane, WA

NO THUNDER-OUS APPLAUSE

I have been a hardcore boxing fan for over 35 years. I have not always agreed with every decision made, but I have never been ashamed of boxing. That is, until I had some friends over to watch *Thunderbox*. What pure crap. There were a bunch of MTV rejects jumping around in a boxing ring, yelling to drum beats. Sideshow freaks like these misuse the word "boxing" and give the sport a bad name.

EDDIE FIELDER
Tuscaloosa, AL ■

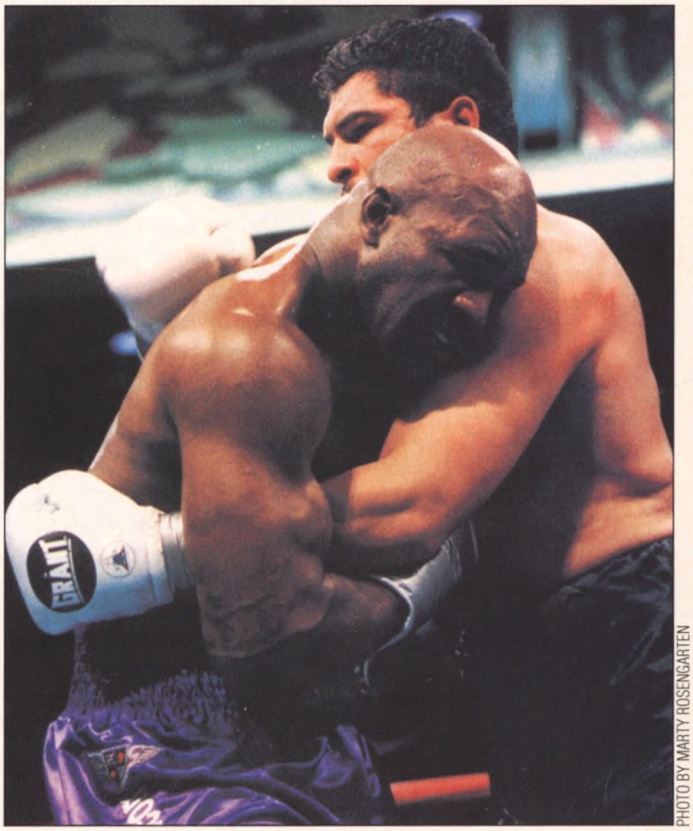


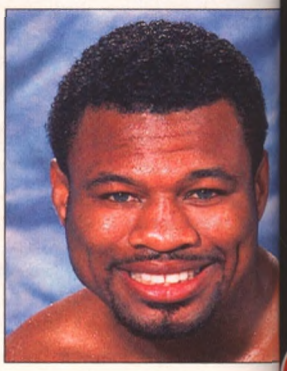
PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

No more John Ruiz, pleads reader Jeremy Guerrieri. Ruiz, pictured clinching with Evander Holyfield, has proven time and again that he can create boring grab-a-thons with just about anyone.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

OUT OF THE FORREST



Mosley: Calling out the best at 154

It would be an understatement to say the year 2002 wasn't very kind to **Shane Mosley**. He went 0-2 (after going 38-0 over the previous nine years), he lost his welterweight title, and he slipped from number one in THE RING's pound-for-pound ratings to number nine.

But 2003 is a new year for Sugar Shane, and he's looking forward to getting a new start in a new division—against a new opponent. No more **Vernon Forrest** for this guy, at least not for a little while. Mosley, who held titles at lightweight and then welter, will begin his junior middleweight campaign in January (on either the 11th or the 18th), possibly against WBO beltholder **Daniel Santos**. After that, there are a handful of high-stakes options, and Mosley is interested in all of them.

"**Oscar De La Hoya**, **Fernando Vargas**, and **Winky Wright**, I want to fight all three of them," said Mosley, 31, a couple of days prior to the De La Hoya-Vargas showdown. "They're all great fights for me, and there's no sense taking on the lesser guys. I want to get all the belts a and I plan on being there for a while."

Mosley said he could have continued to fight at 147 pounds, but said making the weight was becoming "uncomfort So was fighting Forrest, whose style is obviously a nightmare for Sugar Shane and led to a pair of unanimous decision last year. With Forrest the one and only true champion at the weight, it just made sense for Mosley to fight at junior m even if it means fighting guys who are naturally a bit bigger than he is.

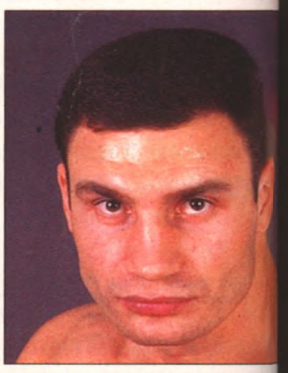
One common criticism heard after the Forrest fights was that Mosley's trainer, his father **Jack**, failed to trigger a ments when it was obvious things weren't going his son's way. So the question is, will there be any changes to S Shane's corner come January?

"My father will always be there," Mosley said, "but we could work with another coach also if there's someone my f is compatible with. We've had different people help out in the past. We had **John David Jackson** helping prepare me f De La Hoya fight. I'll basically have the same team as always, but adding someone is a possibility."

Like another famous "Sugar," Mosley said he wants to begin getting into the promotional end of the sport so h remain involved in boxing after his career is over. But he says not to expect that time to come all that soon.

"I envision boxing for about another six or seven years," he said. "My body feels good. I love this sport, and I have left to put into it."

LISTEN UP



Klitschko: Lewis' choice to challenge

A slew of major heavyweight fights were close to being announced as we went to press, so here's what appears likely: **Lennox Lewis** probably won't defend the world title again until next February, and the opponent will be the **Patrick McEnroe** of the **Klitschko** family, big brother **Vitali**. Also, **John Ruiz** may defend the WBA belt against world light heavyweight champ **Roy Jones** on December 7, and **Chris Byrd** and **Evander Holyfield** will probably clash for the recently vacated IBF strap on December 14. Both of those fights would be televised by HBO, while Showtime may counter with **Mike Tyson**-**Clifford Etienne** on December 7 … Showtime also has an interesting junior welterweight bout set for November 2, with former titleholders **Sharmba Mitchell** and **Vince Phillips** colliding … Super middleweight titlist **Eric Lucas'** next challenger will be German **Markus Beyer**, sometime in November or December … A pair of pay-per-view experiments are headed our way in early-November. On November 8, we'll see if a totally non-competitive scrap between big-name female fighters can sell **Christy Martin** meets **Mia St. John**. And the following night, November 9, lightweight beltholder **Paul Spadafora** wi the lower-priced PPV waters against an opponent to be announced. Former Spadafora foes **Angel Manfredy** and Victo **Sosa** will clash on the undercard, with the winner in position for a rematch with "The Pittsburgh Kid."

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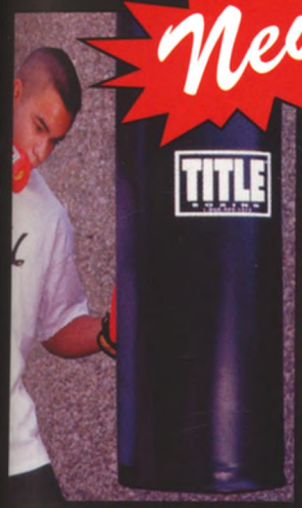

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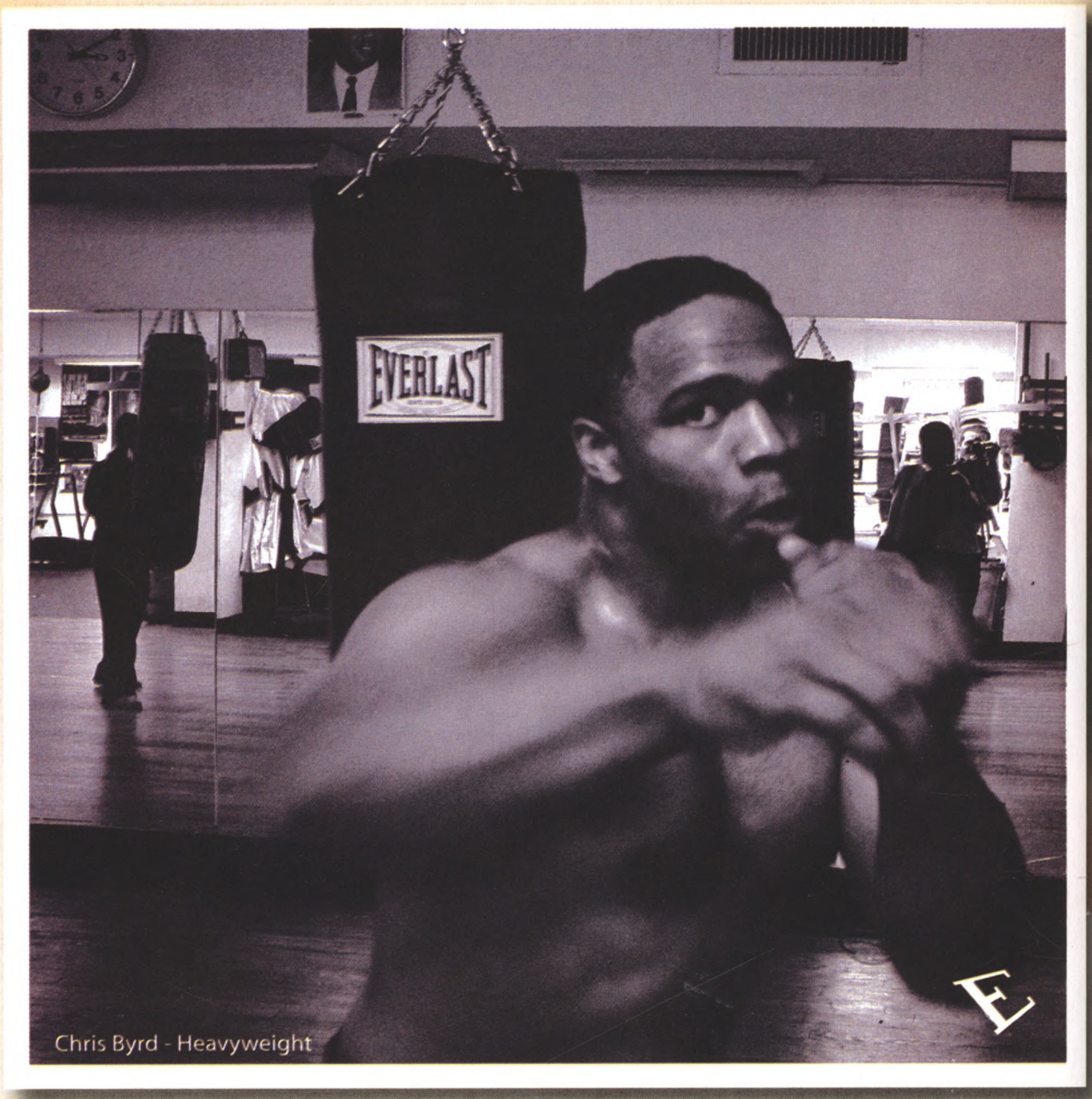

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